

JAHANGIR IN HIS YOUTH (DARA SHUKOH ALBUM).

THE LIBRARY OF THE INDIA OFFICE

A HISTORICAL SKETCH

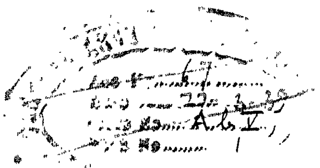
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BY

A. J. ARBERRY, Litt.D.
Assistant Librarian

WITH A FOREWORD BY

THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF ZETLAND
P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
Secretary of State for India and for Burma



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FOREWORD

By the Most Hon. the Marquess of Zetland,
P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
Secretary of State for India and for Burma.

The general public is scarcely aware of the existence, in a Government office in Whitehall, of a celebrated library containing a large collection of eastern literature and books relating to eastern, especially Indian, affairs. In this little volume, compiled in the Library of the India Office, a romantic story is told—the story how, from humble beginnings in the days of the East India Company, this collection has grown to its present impressive dimensions; how it has gathered to itself such precious possessions as the Tippoo Sultan manuscripts and the Sir Philip Francis Papers, documents which are a measure of its value to scholars and its interest to the world at large. The Library is open by arrangement to all serious students who desire to take advantage of the resources at its command: its treasures may be seen by visitors. I have every confidence in recommending the public to read this account of a national, indeed an imperial, possession; and I feel no doubt that acquaintance with its contents will lead to still greater employment of the facilities available for the extension of knowledge and research.

ZETLAND.

PREFACE

The Library of the India Office is the oldest, and also the largest, specialist oriental library in existence. In the pages which follow, a sketch of its history is given, from its foundation, 140 years ago, by the Directors of the East India Company, down to the present day, when, with a complement of some 20,000 manuscripts and 230,000 printed books, it constitutes a magnificent reference library invaluable to all who are interested in India and the East, student and dilettante alike.

In compiling this account, the author has drawn on sources, largely in manuscript, the greater part of which are preserved in the Record Department of the India Office. His task has been greatly facilitated by the generous assistance of Mr. W. T. Ottewill, O.B.E., Superintendent of Records, and Mr. R. W. Wright, M.B.E., his Assistant. He also has to acknowledge with gratitude the help and encouragement given by Dr. H. N. Randle, D.Phil., Librarian of the India Office, and Sir William Foster, C.I.E., who kindly read through the typescript and made valuable suggestions which have been gladly followed.

THE LIBRARY OF THE INDIA OFFICE

§ 1

AMONG the many symptoms of the re-orientation of the human mind and human interests occasioned by the revolutionary movement in Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century, none is more remarkable, *sui generis*, or more striking, than the sudden, and, as it seems, spontaneous growth of a realization that the Orient had spiritual, as well as material, riches to offer to the Occident: its material wealth had, indeed, for some centuries now been exploited; but of its spiritual treasures none, save a very few eccentric and anachronistic geniuses, had the remotest conception.

In this volume is told the story of the beginnings and development of a great State Library: and this story illustrates very aptly the observations made above. For the Library of the East India Company, afterwards styled the Library of the India Office, came into being at the very time when the imaginations of thinking men were being captured by the discovery of a *terra incognita* in the world of human culture: and its history up to the present day is indissolubly linked up with the history of the development of that truly liberal movement of the Western mind which we call Orientalism.

India is the birthplace of two great oriental cultures, and has been for many centuries the home of a third. The parent of many modern Indian languages is Sanskrit, which is also the sacred language of the Hindu faith. Another great group of Indian languages is de-

rived from Persian, which in its turn was profoundly influenced, thirteen hundred years ago, by the impact of Arabic, the language of Muḥammad and the Qur'ān. Yet, until the last quarter of [illegible] ntury, the study of Sanskrit was, to all [illegible] in India, a closed book.[1] In 1776, Warren Hastings, making the memorable decision that Indians should be ruled according to their own laws, called upon a commission of learned Pandits to compile a code of ordinances:[2] "and the original Text, delivered in the Hindoo Language, was faithfully translated by the Interpreters into the Persian Idiom"[3]—for there was no Englishman sufficiently familiar with the Sanskrit language, to be able to render the original text of the compilation into English.[4]

Such were the obscure beginnings of the modern study of Sanskrit. In 1784, the Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded with the declared object of prosecuting an "enquiry into the history and antiquities, arts, sciences, and literature of Asia":[5] and among the list of the foundation members of the Society[6] we find the names of Sir William Jones, its first President, and Sir Charles Wilkins, first Librarian of the East India Company's Library—two eminent scholars who were the pioneers of Sanskrit philology.

So much for the state of Sanskrit studies at the end of the eighteenth century. Persian, being the official court-

[1] For the history of the origins of Sanskrit studies in Europe, see M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur* (Leipzig, 1904-1920), i, pp. 8 ff.; A. A. MacDonell, *India's Past* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 236-9.

[2] See Winternitz, *op. cit.*, i, p. 9; MacDonell, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

[3] *A Code of Gentoo Laws* (London, 1776), p. 5.

[4] Similarly, the first European translation of the *Upanishads* was Anquetil Duperron's *Oupnek'hat* (Paris, 1801-2), a Latin version of the seventeenth century Persian paraphrase of the original; while Bhāskara's *Bījagaṇita* was rendered into English in 1813 by E. Strachey through the medium of 'Aṭā' Allāh Rashīdī's Persian translation.

[5] See *Centenary Review of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1885), p. 4.

[6] See *ibid.*, p. 3, footnote.

language of the Mogul Empire, and the *lingua franca* of India as a whole, was tolerably widely known among the servants of the East India Company: yet their knowledge of the language was in the main strictly circumscribed, and did not venture far beyond the limits set by the necessity of maintaining an elegant correspondence in that language with the rulers and merchants of India. Nor was the knowledge of Persian and Arabic turned to much better account in Europe. Arabic had long since ceased to be the passport to the study of Greek medicine and philosophy; and those who studied it, did so mainly in order to be in the position to refute the "Mahometan blasphemies and impostures."[1] That the study of Arabic and Persian might ever be esteemed a worthy branch of the humanities, would never have come within the range of the most unorthodox and liberal imagination: and for this study likewise, the turn of the century was, in a very real sense, a turning-point.

To the end of the eighteenth century, and the beginning of the nineteenth, belong the publication of the first great folio catalogues of Arabic manuscripts,[2] and of the sumptuous "Notices et Extraits des MSS. de la Bibliothèque du Roi" (Paris, 1787-1823), the first printed editions of the *Shāh-nāmah*[3] and other renowned classics, and the foundation of oriental societies and the beginning of oriental journals in England, France and Ger-

[1] The title-page of the first English version of the Qur'ān reads: "The Alcoran of Mahomet, Translated out of Arabique into French. . . . And newly Englished, for the satisfaction of all that desire to look into the Turkish vanities. London, 1649."

[2] M. Casiri, *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escurialensis*, Matriti, 1760-70; J. Uri, *Bibliothecæ Bodleianæ Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium Catalogus.* Pars Prima. Oxonii, 1787. The first catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts published was A. Hamilton and L. Langlès, *Catalogue des Manuscrits Sanskrits de la Bibliothèque Impériale*, Paris, 1807.

[3] Of the edition planned by M. Lumsden, to be in 8 volumes, only one volume was published, at the Company's Press at Calcutta, in 1811. The earliest complete text is that of Turner-Macan, in 4 volumes, Calcutta, 1829.

many.[1] The impact of these strange new studies on the cultured minds of the West is typically illustrated by such diverse phenomena as Goethe's *West-östliche Dīwān*, Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, Beckford's *Vathek*, and the philosophy of Schopenhauer.

In a Public Letter, written at the order of the Court of Directors of the East India Company on the 25th May, 1798,[2] the following paragraphs occur:

105. You will have observed by our Dispatches from time to time that we have invariably manifested as the occasion required, our disposition for the encouragement of Indian Literature. We understand it has been of late years a frequent practice among our Servants, especially in Bengal, to make Collections of Oriental Manuscripts, many of which have afterwards been brought into this country. These remaining in private hands, and being likely in a course of time to pass into others, in which probably no use can be made of them, they are in danger of being neglected, and at length in a great measure lost to Europe as well as to India. We think this issue a matter of greater regret, because we apprehend that since the decline of the Mogul Empire,[3] the encouragement formerly given in it to Persian Literature has ceased; that hardly any new Works of celebrity appear and that few Copies of Books of established Character are now made; so that there being by the accidents of time, and the exportation of many of the best [last two words scored through] Manuscripts, a progressive diminution of the original stock, Hindostan may at length be much thinned of its literary Stores, without greatly enriching Europe. To prevent in part this injury to Letters, we have thought that the Institution of a public Repository in this Country for Oriental Writings,

[1] The *Asiatic Miscellany* began issue at Calcutta in 1789; the *Journal Asiatique* at Paris in 1822; the *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society* at London in 1827; the *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* at Göttingen in 1837.

[2] *Bengal Despatches*, vol. xxxii, pp. 430-9.

[3] When these words were written, the official representative of the great Mogul dynasty was Shāh 'Ālam, blinded in 1788 by the Rohilla Ghulām Qādir: he was finally taken under British protection in 1803. See *Cambridge History of India*, iv, p. 448.

would be useful, and that a thing professedly of this kind is still a bibliothecal desideratum here. It is not our meaning that the Company should go into the [scored out: then added above, 'any considerable'] expense in [first hand, 'of'] forming a Collection of Eastern Books, but we think the India House might with particular propriety be the centre of an ample accumulation of that nature; and conceiving also that Gentlemen might chuse gratuitously [this word scored through] to lodge valuable Compositions, where they could be safely preserved and become useful to the Public, we therefore desire it to be made known that we are willing to allot a suitable Apartment for the purpose of an Oriental Repository, in the additional Buildings now erecting in Leadenhall Street; and that all Eastern Manuscripts transmitted to that Repository will be carefully preserved and registered there, with the Names of the Contributors [last six words scored through].

106. By such a Collection the Literature of Persia and Mahomedan India may be preserved in this Country after, perhaps, it shall, from further changes, and the further declension of taste for it, be partly lost in its original Seats.

107. Nor would we confine this Collection to Persian and Arabian Manuscripts. The Shanscrit writings, from the long subjection of the Hindoos to a Foreign Government, from the discouragements their Literature in consequence experienced, and from the ravages of time, must have suffered greatly. We should be glad, therefore, that Copies of all the valuable Books which remain in that Language, or in any ancient Dialects of the Hindoos, might, through the Industry and Liberality [last two words scored through] of Individuals, at length be placed in safety in this Island, and form a part of the proposed Collection.

Such is the earliest extant reference, in the papers of the Company, to the project of forming a collection of oriental manuscripts. It is now impossible to determine with certainty who were the prime movers in this project. Credit for the conception was given long ago to Robert Orme, the distinguished Historiographer of the Company; for in a footnote to pages xxviii-xxix of the

"Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Author," prefixed to the posthumous (1805) edition of Orme's *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire*, we read:

> Mr. Orme used frequently to lament the want of an Oriental collection of manuscripts and printed books in this country; for affording that information on Indian affairs, the expense and labour of obtaining which was oppressive in the extreme when undertaken by private individuals. The establishment of such a library, he observed, would be a national honour, the expense of which would be trivial, in comparison with the advantage that must accrue from it. He used to add, that a ship's cargo of original and valuable MSS. might be collected in the settlements between Delhi and cape Comorin.[1]

If Orme himself conceived the idea, he must have found not a few servants of the Company who were prepared to second his plan; and at least one former servant to whom the conception made an immediate and personal appeal. Orme himself, for all that he had resided many years in India, and had established for himself a reputation as being the greatest historian of that country England had hitherto produced, was almost, if not wholly, innocent of oriental scholarship.[2] But there was now living in London a man who had attained great distinction during the years of his service in Bengal, and particularly for his devotion to the study of Indian languages. Charles Wilkins, the father of Sanskrit learning, having heard talk about the possibility that a Library or Museum might be established in

[1] The novelty of the idea of establishing such a collection, and of the nascent growth of orientalism in general, is illustrated by the following sentences which occur on p. lxvi of the same "Memoirs": "The successful industry of a few gentlemen, in the most difficult and laborious parts of Eastern learning, particularly in the study of the Sanskrit language; the establishment of an Oriental Library and Museum at the East India House . . . will mark the commencement of the nineteenth century as a grand epocha in the republic of letters."

[2] "Memoirs," p. xxiv.

Leadenhall Street, in January 1799 wrote the following letter to the Court of Directors of the Honourable East India Company:[1]

GENTLEMEN,

Having heard that your Honorable Court has lately passed the very laudable resolution appropriating a portion of the new buildings at the India House to the purpose of an Oriental Museum, I humbly presume upon the little knowledge and experience I acquired in those matters which seem the natural objects of your design, during a residence of nearly sixteen years in the Company's employ in Bengal, to make you a tender of my advice and assistance; not only in digesting such a plan as shall render the institution a public benefit, but in classing and arranging such books and productions of Nature and Art, as are, or may be collected, and, finally, (if such an employ should be found necessary) to take charge of the Museum, and give up my whole attention towards rendering it a Monument of the Taste, as well as of the Munificence of its Founders.

I have already committed to paper a sketch of my ideas of what the Museum, to be useful, as well as ornamental, should principally consist; but as it might be deemed officious in me to communicate it unasked, and when, perhaps, it has been anticipated by one more perfect, that, with any other services in my power, is reserved for your commands.

I have the honor to subscribe myself,
Gentlemen,
Your most obedient
Humble Servant,
CHAS WILKINS.

FITZROY SQUARE,
No. 33.
January 1799.

Wilkins was born in 1749 or 1750 at Frome in Somerset: his mother was the niece of Robert Bateman Wray,

[1] *Miscellaneous Letters Received*, vol. 100 (1799, 1), no. 2. For an account of the building in Leadenhall Street referred to in the letter, see W. Foster, *The East India House* (London, 1924), pp. 138 ff.

the noted engraver, from whom Wilkins may have inherited certain of his various talents. At the age of 20 he went out to Bengal as a writer in the service of the East India Company,[1] and about eight years later, began the study of Sanskrit, being already well grounded in Bengali and Persian. The firstfruits of this study, in which he was assisted by admiring pundits, was a translation of the *Bhagavad-gitā*, which, at the instance and through the insistence of Warren Hastings, was in 1785 published at the expense of the Company. To this publication Hastings contributed a laudatory notice, reflecting credit not on Wilkins' scholarship alone, but also on the spirit of liberal insight and sympathy which characterized the great Governor-General. The work, comparatively short as it is—it runs into no more than [illegible] profound impression on the European [illegible] 'all hailed its appearance as the dawn of that brilliant light, which has subsequently shone with so much lustre in the productions of Sir William Jones, Mr. Colebrooke, Professor Wilson, &c., and which has dispelled the darkness in which the pedantry of Greek and Hebrew scholars had involved the etymology of the languages of Europe and Asia."[2]

While in Bengal, Wilkins had turned his attention to the problem of printing in oriental languages. His first experiments were with the Bengali characters, made at the request of Warren Hastings for use in the publication of Halhed's *Grammar of the Bengal Language* (Hoogly, 1778). Later he designed with great success a set of Nagari characters for the printing of Sanskrit; and, with less conspicuous *éclat*, a Persian fount, which was nevertheless used for many years.[3] Wilkins may

[1] *Court Book*, vol. 78, p. 311.

[2] *Asiatic Journal*, vol. xx, New Series (1836), p. 166.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 167-8; cf. *Oriental Studies in Honour of Cursetji Erachji Pavry*, pp. 457-8, where Storey lists some of the books which were printed in Wilkins' Persian fount.

therefore with some justice be said to have been at once the Erasmus and the Caxton of Indian culture.

Among the earliest admirers and followers of Wilkins was the celebrated jurist, Sir William Jones, who, as observed above, with Wilkins and a group of other friends founded, in 1784, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and was its first President. Being shown by Wilkins a version of the Institutes of Manu which the latter was preparing, and of which about one-third had already been completed, Jones suggested that he should hand over the venture to himself, and to this Wilkins, with remarkable self-abnegation—lamentably rare in the world of science—readily consented. In 1794 was published Jones' famous *Institutes of Hindu Law*.

After sixteen years of service, Wilkins was obliged, by considerations of health, to return to England. At first he lived at Bath, and there published his translation of the *Hitopadēsa* (1787): later he bought a house in Kent, which was completely destroyed by fire, some time in 1796. Fortunately his books and manuscripts, though severely damaged, were not totally lost; but his types, punches and matrices suffered disastrously.[1] This calamity undermined the health of his wife: and it may well be that these misfortunes were the private incentive which inspired his public interest in the Company's new venture.

Wilkins' letter to the Court of Directors was read on 2 January 1799, and referred to the Committee of Correspondence:[2] but no action appears to have been taken, beyond, it would seem, his being invited to submit the "sketch" mentioned in his letter. The following is the text of this document:[3]

[1] For a correspondence on this subject between Wilkins and his friend W. Marsden, see MSS. Eur. F. 18/1, pp. 255-8.

[2] *Court Book*, vol. 107 A, p. 760.

[3] J. Forbes Watson, *On the measures required for . . . the India Museum and Library* (London, 1874), Appendix B, pp. 55-6.

Sketch of a Plan for an Oriental Museum proposed to be established at the India House.

A Library,

To consist of Manuscripts and Printed Books.

The Manuscripts to include works in all the languages of Asia; but particularly in the Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrita: and great care should be taken to make the collection very select, as well in correctness as subject

The Printed Books should consist generally of all such works as in any way relate to Oriental subjects, including all that has been published upon the languages of the East, and every work which has appeared under the patronage of the Company. Maps, charts, and views, with coins, medals, statues, and inscriptions, may be included under this head.

A Cabinet of Natural Productions.

Under this head are included Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral productions.

The Animal Productions should comprehend chiefly such animals, parts of animals, or produce of animals, as are objects of commerce, and all in their natural state: the tusks of the elephant, the wool of the shawl goat, the musk in its bag, the cocoons of the different species of silk worms (not omitting that curious sort which is cultivated near Purnea, and is fed upon the leaves of the Palma Christi, and which is little, if at all known in Europe), lack, with its colouring substance in its crude state, the cochineal, and the edible birds' nests. Such of the animals as produce these and similar substances, provided they be not too large, may be admitted; nor should others which are only objects of curiosity, when offered as presents, be refused a place in the Museum. Each article should be accompanied by an Abstract of its Natural History.

The Vegetable Productions should, generally speaking, comprise specimens of all the plants, seeds, and fruits of Asia; but attention should, in a more particular manner, be paid to such trees and plants whose produce is an article of

commerce. There should be specimens of all the different trees whose wood or timber is in estimation for ship-building, or domestic purposes; as well as of such as are esteemed for their medicinal virtues or fragrant scent. Each specimen should be accompanied by a Memorandum of its peculiar qualities, place of growth, &c. The different species of indigo, and other plants used in staining and dyeing, of the sugar cane and tea trees, and of the cotton plants, must not be neglected any more than the numerous tribe of oils, gums, and resins, which are the natural produce of the plants of Asia.

The Mineral Productions will, in the first place, include specimens of the ores of all the metals and semi-metals of the East, as well as of the metals themselves when found in their perfect state in the earth, which is sometimes the case. Specimens should be procured of the very curious species of steel which is known at Bombay by the name of bat, or coots. As pit coal has within these few years been found in the Province of Beerbhoom and some other parts of India, samples of it should be procured; as also of the bitumens and petroleums which abound in some parts of Asia. It would be a curiosity to our chymists to see the saltpetre, and the fossil borax as it is taken from the pits. There should also be a collection of precious stones, and of the various species of marble and alabaster. If not mistaken, marble fit for the statuary is produced at the Cape. Particular attention should be paid to those stones, earths, and clays as might be useful in our manufactures. Specimens of the kern stone, which is used for cutting the inferior gems, should be procured, and of the porcelaine earths called petunsee and kaolin, found in great abundance in Beerbhoom. Samples of that very curious fossil known in Bengal by the name of cuncur, of which the natives make lime, should also have a place in the Museum.

Artificial Productions.

Under this title come generally samples of all the manufactures of Asia, and, particularly, of every article in silk and cotton, in every stage from the cocoon and pod to the cloth ready for the market; of the different sorts of colouring sub-

stances prepared in India; of sugar and sugar-candy; of salt-petre and borax, &c. &c. Models of the various machines and tools used in the manufactures of Asia should form a part of the Collection; and also of the implements of husbandry, and instruments used in their sciences, mathematical, astronomical, musical, &c. &c.

Miscellaneous Articles.

To consist of curiosities, chiefly presents, and generally such things as cannot conveniently be classed under any of the former heads.

Memorandum.

Should the Museum be established, how very desirable it would be to the lovers and promoters of Eastern learning, and how exceedingly useful to the cause of science in general, if a Society, similar to that now flourishing in Calcutta, were established under the patronage of the Court of Directors for the time being, with permission to hold their meetings in the Library, and the use of the Collection so far as to assist them in their researches. There are several of the distinguished members of the Asiatic Society of Bengal now residing in England, and the names of many other celebrated Oriental scholars occur with the first thought of such an institution.

A printing office, furnished with types in the Oriental characters, might be established by the Company, at which their current business might be executed, which of itself, it is presumed, would go a great way towards a reimbursement of the expense. Such works as may be done for the Society, their Transactions, &c., to be paid for out of their own funds.

C. W.

This is in every respect a most significant document. It is easy to see in Wilkins' grandiose scheme that same spirit, instinct with the urge for universal learning, which created the Asiatic Society of Bengal, which society remains to this day faithful to the catholicity of vision of its founders. In it may be seen also that grasp of the

interlacing of the interests of science and industry, of culture and business, which was for all time consummated in the great Exhibition of 1851. In it may be seen the curator's true natural regard for the appetites of the two categories of persons who make use of public libraries and museums: the specialist, and the curious vulgar.[1] In it may, finally, be seen the testament which directed the destinies of the Museum and Library of the East India Company for all the years that remained to the Company, until it came to an end. And who will say that Wilkins was not right? The day may yet come, when a Museum, for which there is insistent clamour in diverse circles, catholic as the Empire, rich in its infinite varieties as the human mind, will in this London display to the world for all time the races and ideals which were the physical and spiritual components of the British Commonwealth of Nations, in which Commonwealth India, by reason of its greatness in extent and splendour of soul, plays the preponderant part.

Wilkins waited. The months went by, and nothing happened. In November of that same year, he wrote to his old patron and admirer, Warren Hastings, soliciting his aid in approaching the Directors of the Company. Wilkins' letter is lost; but Hastings replied:

DAYLESFORD HOUSE,
Sunday.

MY DEAR WILKINS,

I rec'd yours too late to ans[we]r it fully; but I cannot wait another day to tell you, that in whatever way I can promote the institution, or your appoint[men]t to the charge of its materials, I will do it with pleasure. I should have no objection to address the Court of D[i]r[ector]s themselves on such an occasion as the establishment of a new system for

[1] It will be shown hereafter, how soon and how enthusiastically the public welcomed the Company's Museum, as a place for gratifying its legitimate curiosity.

ingrafting the knowledge of India on the commercial persuits [*sic*] of the Company. Consult Mr. Bensley on this, & give me his opinion upon it. It will decide mine.

I grieve to hear that your domestic sufferings still exist. Mrs Hastings is thankful for your remembrance of her, & desires me to present her compl[iment]s & to unite her wishes with mine for Mrs. Wilkins's restoration to health.

Yours most truly & affect[ionate]ly
WARREN HASTINGS.[1]

To this letter Wilkins sent the following answer:[2]

CAMDEN HOUSE, KENSINGTON,
6th Novr 1799.

MY DEAR MR. HASTINGS,

I yesterday waited on Mr. Bensley to consult him upon your proposal to address the Court of Directors in my behalf; but he is still of opinion, that a letter to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman conjointly (as it must ultimately come before the Court) will answer every purpose, as well, if not better. He said he would recommend, that having, in your own impressive style and manner, signified your opinion of the importance of the institution, you proceed to inform them of my having made you acquainted with my wish to have the superintendence of it, and to recommend me as a fit person for such a trust, mentioning some of those humble efforts of mine upon which my pretensions are founded & which your partiality will naturally call qualifications. He further thinks you may say, you have seen the outlines of "a Plan for the establishment of a new System for ingrafting the knowledge of India on the commercial pursuits of the Company"; and if the idea has met with your approbation, how much may it be improved by a few dashes of your pencil?

My vanity will not let me conclude till I have informed you, that I have received a very flattering letter from Lady Spencer, assuring me, in the kindest terms, that both she and her Lord will do every thing in their power to secure my success. Her Ladyship thinks Dundas means not well, & perhaps she has better reasons for so judging than we are

[1] MSS. Eur. F. 18/1, pp. 259-260. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 261-4.

aware of. With a thousand apologies for the great freedom I take with you, and our united Thanks to Mrs. Hastings & yourself for your kind wishes respecting the health of my poor wife, I remain

My Dear Sir,
Your most affectionate
And respectful Humble servt
CHAS. WILKINS.

Mr Bensley begs you will not take the trouble to write to him upon this business. Poor fellow he is laid up with his old complaint in his face. In your letter please to take no notice of your being acquainted with any opposition. CW

Hastings accordingly addressed the Chairman of the Court in the following terms:[1]

DAYLESFORD HOUSE,
15th Novr 1799.

SIR,

Mr Wilkins has informed me, that the Hon'ble Court of Directors have it in contemplation to establish a Museum of Indian literature. He has also communicated to me the offer which he has made of his services to superintend the proposed institution; and he has requested that I will notify to you my opinion of his fitness for such a charge. I trust to my experienced knowledge of your candor and liberality, that you will not think me guilty of an unbecoming liberty in complying with his request, and in recommending him to you, as I do most earnestly and truly, and through you (if you shall deem my recommendation deserving of that distinction) to the Hon'ble Court of Directors, as amply qualified to discharge every duty which can appertain to an office like that in question.

That this attestation may not appear to be the mere effect of personal favor or solicitation, I beg leave to offer an undoubted proof of my long confirmed opinion of Mr Wilkins's talents, in the following detailed exposition of it, which I ventured to deliver, fifteen years ago, to a very worthy predecessor of yours, Mr Nathaniel Smith, and which was after-

[1] *Miscellaneous Letters Received*, vol. 101 (1799, 2), no. 236.

wards printed for publication by the express command of the Honble Court of Directors of that time.

Extract of a letter to Nathaniel Smith, Esqr dated Benaris, 4th October 1784.

"It now remains to say something of the Translator, Mr "Charles Wilkins. This Gentleman, to whose ingenuity, "unaided by models for imitation, and by artists for his "direction, your government is indebted for its printing "office, and for many official purposes to which it has been "profitably applied, with an extent unknown in Europe, has "united to an early and successful attainment of the Persian "and Bengal languages the study of the Sanscreĕt. To this "he devoted himself with a perseverance of which there are "few examples, and with a success which encouraged him "to undertake the translation of the Mahābhārut. This book "is said to consist of more than one hundred thousand "metrical stanzas, of which he has at this time translated "more than a third; and, if I may trust to the imperfect tests "by which I myself have tried a very small portion of it "through the medium of another language, he has rendered "it with great accuracy and fidelity. Of its elegance, and the "skill with which he has familiarized (if I may so express it) "his own native language to so foreign an original, I may "not speak, as from the specimen herewith presented, who-"ever reads it will judge for himself.

"Mr Wilkins's health having suffered a decline from the "fatigues of business, from which his gratuitous labors "allowed him no relaxation, he was advised to try a change "of air for his recovery. I myself recommended that of "Benares, for the sake of the additional advantage which he "might derive from a residence in a place which is considered "as the first seminary of Hindoo learning; and I promoted "his application to the Board, for their permission to repair "thither, without forfeiting his official appointments during "the term of his absence."[1]

Had my opinion of Mr Wilkins's qualifications for an office similar to that which I now suppose likely to become necessary, been required of me at the time when the preceding paragraphs were written, I should have pronounced him

[1] C. Wilkins, *The Bhăgvăt-gēētā* (London, 1785), pp. 11-12.

not only duly qualified, but the only person that was so; since he was then the only one, or he was the first, who possessed a knowledge of the Sanscreet tongue, which is the medium of all that is valuable of the Braminical writings, the most ancient perhaps of any now extant. If his example, and the encouragement since given to the study of that language, have produced other proficients in it, yet the first merit is unquestionably his, who both led the way, and shewed the attainment of it to be practicable: and that merit, I have no doubt, will have its due influence on the disposition which the Hon'ble Court of Directors have ever manifested to employ and reward those who under their authority and patronage possess so strong a claim to their favor. Such, I presume too, would naturally be their first object in the formation of a new and untried system intended for the purpose of ingrafting the science of India on the commercial persuits [*sic*] of the Company.

May I be permitted to offer the respectful tribute of my praise to the liberality, and no less to the wisdom of that respectable body, which unrestrained by the principles which have, in other instances, almost invariably bounded the views of Men associated for the purposes of pecuniary gain, has joined a desire to add the acquisition of knowledge (and wonderful will be the stores which the projected institution under such auspices will lay open to them) to the power, the riches and the glory which its acts have already so largely contributed to the British Empire and Name?

I have the honor to be with the truest sentiments of respect and grateful attachment,

Sir,

Your most obedient and faithful servant,

WARREN HASTINGS.

This letter was duly read in Court, and referred to the Committee of Correspondence to examine and report.[1] Inaction again followed. But Wilkins was not to be denied; and at the end of 1800, or early in 1801, he wrote another application "renewing the offer of his Services as Librarian to the Oriental Repository intended

[1] *Court Book*, vol. 108 A, pp. 734-5 (20 November 1799).

to be formed at the India House, and as the Company's Oriental Translator."[1] This time he had chosen his moment well. Whatever may have been the cause of earlier delay—possibly the opposition of Dundas, as Lady Spencer had hinted[2]—action was now immediate and decisive. The letter was referred to the Committee of Correspondence, which sat immediately, and submitted a favourable report:[3] this was read in Court the same day, whereupon it was[4]

> RESOLVED That Mr Charles Wilkins be appointed Librarian to the Oriental Repository with a Salary of £200 per annum, and that Mr Bruce the Company's Historiographer[5] be always permitted to have free access to the Books and Papers contained therein.

It is appropriate here to correct certain misstatements which have appeared in print, relative to the formation and early history of the Library.

In the obituary notice for Sir Charles Wilkins which was contributed to the *Asiatic Journal* for July 1836, on page 168, it is alleged that "in the year 1800 the East India Company resolved to have a Librarian for the invaluable collection of MSS. of which they had become possessed by the capture of Seringapatam, and from various other sources." This suggestion is incorporated into the notice of Wilkins in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. lxi, p. 260: "but in 1800 he re-entered the service of the East India Company as librarian, an office then established for the custody of oriental manuscripts taken at Seringapatam and elsewhere." It is to be noted, how the author of the latter article improves

[1] *Court Book*, vol. 109 A, pp. 1044-5 (18 February 1801).
[2] Dundas quitted the office of President of the India Board in 1801; see W. Foster, *John Company* (London, 1926), p. 259.
[3] *Correspondence Reports*, vol. 24, p. 126.
[4] *Court Book*, vol. 109 A, p. 1066 [*sic*, for 1056].
[5] Bruce was joint Historiographer with Orme from 1793, and succeeded Orme as sole Historiographer when the latter died, in January 1801: see W. Foster, *John Company*, pp. 238-9.

on his authority, by converting "from various other sources," which opens up the possibility of free benefaction, into "elsewhere," implying that all the treasures in manuscripts of which the Company in 1800 stood possessed—at least in that writer's imagination—had been "taken" in prosecution of one or another successful martial operation.

As a matter of fact, it was in 1798, as we have shewn, that the Board of Directors determined to form a Library: Seringapatam did not fall until 1799. It is true that the capture of Seringapatam was followed by the presentation, on the part of the army, of Tippoo Sultan's library to the civil authorities: but, as will be seen later, when the history of that collection is told at length, the official letter of presentation was not written until 11 September 1800, instructions for the transfer of the collection to London were not sent out until 1805, and the complete reception of that part of the Library which eventually found its way to East India House did not take place until 1837. As for collections secured from other sources prior to the inception of the nineteenth century, of these there is no trace.

It is stated in an article entitled "The India Office Library," printed in the Allahabad *Pioneer* of 4 August 1904, that Wilkins was appointed Librarian "at a salary of £1,000 per annum": this statement is repeated in the extravaganza "A Little Known and Remarkable Library," contributed by "James Cassidy" (Mrs. Storey) to the July issue of the *India Magazine* of 1906, pp. 180-192.

As a matter of fact, Wilkins' initial salary as Librarian was £200 *per annum*: the augmentations which finally brought this sum to the total of £1,000 were gradual, and in virtue of increased responsibilities and multiplication of offices. But this is to anticipate matters which belong to the next chapter.

§ 2

"MUNIFICENT donations thereupon flowed in from old servants of the Company"—so is described, in the *Report of the Library Committee*, dated 19 March 1877, page 1, the reaction which followed the appointment of Wilkins as the Company's Librarian: and this statement is repeated, with slight variations of language, in the two epitomes of the Library's history quoted at the end of the preceding chapter.

It is a pity that, in the interests of historical truth, this pious hyperbole must be refuted. The fact is, that the earliest beginnings of the new institution were not particularly auspicious. The only acquisition of any considerable importance recorded during the first year of the Library's history, was the reception of the manuscripts and papers of the late Robert Orme, the Company's Historiographer: this most valuable collection will be duly described elsewhere, but here it is pertinent to observe that it was to John Roberts,[1] his executor, that Orme actually made his bequest, and Roberts in turn handed over the volumes and papers to the Court of Directors, with the remark that "he"—that is, Orme —"frequently mentioned to me in his life time his wish, that they should be in possession of the Company."[2] The bequest was announced and accepted in Court on 14 April 1801, and was received in the Library on 2 December of the same year. It was particularly fitting that the earliest, as well as one of the greatest, benefactors of the Library should have been the man who

[1] Roberts was Chairman of the Company in 1796, and again in 1802, as well as during the last four months of 1801, after the resignation of David Scott.

[2] Letter dated 14 April 1801, in *Miscellaneous Letters Received*, vol. 104, p. 166.

had been so largely concerned with bringing the Library into existence.

There is available a complete and detailed record of the day-to-day history of the Library, in a series of folio volumes, commonly known as the *Day Book*, but of which the official designation is the *Daily Account of Books and Curiosities received into the Library*: the earliest entry is dated 20 November 1801. The extremely valuable information contained in these books is supplemented by a series of volumes of *Committee Papers*: these papers are very occasional in the earliest period, only one being dated 1801, after which there is a gap until 1807: these serve to illustrate the administrative development of the Library, and are the forerunners of the current Registry files. To these two sources frequent reference will be made in the following pages.

The first entry in the *Day Book* deserves to be quoted, for it aptly demonstrates the preponderance which, for many subsequent years, was enjoyed by the Museum branch of the institution:

> Novr. 20. Three Elephant Heads, with several detached parts intended to illustrate the natural history of those Animals, so far as relates to their curious mode of Dentition. Presented by John Corse Scott Esq.

Three days later, the first oriental manuscript[1] was received:

> Novr. 23. A Persian Manuscript traced on oil paper, English Title "Mogul History." 1 vol. 4to. Presented by John Roberts Esq.

The same day six brass images [illegible] lu gods were also given to the Library [illegible][2] The following day, the Rev. Mr. Cox presented a Persian

[1] The identity of this manuscript has not been established.

[2] Evidently from the effects of Orme, see Wilkins' Memoir in *Asiatic Annual Register*, 1801, pp. 54-5.

manuscript, the *Futūḥāt i Humāyūn* of Siyāqī Niẓām,[1] and also a Tibetan manuscript. The next acquisition is Orme's bequest, described as follows.

> Dec. 2. 51 Vols containing 190 Tracts on the subject of India and the Company's Affairs from about the [year] 1750 down to the year 1788.—Printed. 231 Vols in Manuscript of various sizes, chiefly bound in Velum, containing a vast body of information upon the subject of India, in Copies which Mr Orme had permission to make from the records and collections of others, and in original Documents, Commonplace &c., with many useful Indexes.
>
> 8 Bundles of Letters, chiefly from Madras and Bombay, upon the subject of the Company's affairs in India.
>
> 20 Rolls, consisting chiefly of foul and proof impressions of the Plates used for Mr Orme's History.
>
> 20 Rolls, containing sundry Maps and Plans.
>
> 35 Books, containing Maps, Plans and Views.
>
> 4 Portfolios do. do.
>
> 17 Rolls of Manuscript Plans and Maps, chiefly the originals of those engraved for Mr. Orme's History.
>
> NB. The eight foregoing Articles were presented to the Library by John Roberts Esq., and are from the Collection of the Company's late Historiographer, Robert Orme Esq., F.A.S.

To the same date belongs the first entry in the volumes of Minutes, Finance and Home:[2]

> At a Committee for superintending the Library the 2d December 1801
>
> Resolved
>
> that all printed Books at present dispersed about the House and Warehouses not in use in the several Departments, be deposited in the Library—together with any articles of

[1] Ethé's *Catalogue*, no. 537.

[2] After Wilkins' death in 1836, the Library Committee was superseded by the Finance and Home Committee: hence this title of the volumes, which also contain extracts, supplied to the Librarian from time to time, of Court procedure insofar as it affected his department.

curiosity that can be collected either at the House or Warehouses.

J R[oberts]
F B[aring]

This minute marks the foundation of the Library's collection of printed books: it incidentally throws light on the earliest arrangements for superintending the administration of the Library. The next notice of the constitution of a Library Committee is contained in the *Court Book*, vol. 113, page 658, where it is stated that, at a Court held on 17 August 1804, it was

RESOLVED That the Chairman
Deputy Chairman
Sir Francis Baring Bt
Sir Hugh Inglis Bart and
John Manship Esqr
be appointed a Committee to Superintend the Company's Library of which Mr Charles Wilkins was appointed Librarian on the 18th February 1801.

The form in which this resolution is worded suggests that this was the first Library Committee to be constituted by the Court.

On 20 December 1801, the Library was presented with a *Shāh-nāmah*, a Sanskrit manuscript, and some Mahratta documents. On the 30th day of the same month, a very interesting and curious document was received—"The Original Manuscript Record of Tippoo Sultaun's Dreams. 8vo. 1 vol."[1] This manuscript was presented to the Court of Directors by Major Beatson, who had quoted extracts from it in translation in his *View of the Origin and Conduct of the War with Tippoo Sultaun*, published in 1800. Beatson wrote the following note on the fly-leaf of this precious manuscript:

This register of the Sultaun's dreams was discovered by Colonel William Kirkpatrick, amongst other papers of a

[1] Ethé 3001. Other Tippoo Sultan documents were received on 8 January 1802, including three memorandum books and five letters.

secret nature, in an escritoire found in the Palace of Seringapatam. Hubbeeb Oollah, one of the most confidential of the Sultaun's servants, was present at the time it was discovered. He knew that there was such a Book of the Sultaun's composition: but had never seen it, as the Sultaun always manifested peculiar anxiety to conceal it from the view of any who happened to approach while he was reading or writing in it. Of these extraordinary productions six only have been as yet translated which I have inserted in the Appendix of a View of the Origin and Conduct of the War. Of some of them it appears that [war] & conquest, and the destruction of the Kaufers, were [no less the] subjects of his sleeping than of his waking thoughts.

This unique human document, which is written in an execrable hand, deserves to be published and studied, for it throws a vivid light on the mental processes of an implacable and dangerous enemy of British rule in India.

Another curious and interesting relic, of which the Library and Museum became possessed at about the same time,[1] was described in the following terms in *The Athenæum* of 5 June 1869:

But we almost forget our old friend, the tiger. Who has not seen and, what is more, heard him at the old India House? and who, having suffered under his unearthly sounds, can ever dismiss him from his memory? It seems that this horrid creature—we mean, of course, the figure representing it—was found among the treasures of Tippoo Sultan when he fell at the siege of Seringapatam. It was a toy of this great Sultan, representing a tiger preying on the body of an English officer, and so constructed that by turning

[1] Actually received into the Library on 29 July 1808, as recorded in the *Day Book* under that date: Recd Tippoo's Musical Tiger. That it was kept in the public reading room of the Library, as is suggested in the extract from *The Athenæum*, seems highly improbable: there was a tendency on the part of the public of that time to confuse the Library with the Museum. But when the model was first received, it must have gone into the Library apartment, as at that date there was no other accommodation at the East India House.

a handle the animal's growl mingled with the shrieks of his dying victim. These shrieks and growls were the constant plague of the student, busy at work in the library of the old India House, when the Leadenhall Street public, unremittingly, it appears, were bent on keeping up the performance of this barbarous machine. No doubt that a number of perverse lections have crept into the editions of our oriental works through the shock which the tiger caused to the nerves of the readers taken unawares. Luckily he is now removed from the library; but what is also lucky, a kind fate has deprived him of his handle, and stopped up, we are happy to think, some of his internal organs; or, as an ignorant visitor would say, he is out of repair; and we do sincerely hope that he will remain so, to be seen and to be admired, if necessary, but to be heard no more.[1]

The tiger is now a treasured exhibit in the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum: modern surgery has partly restored the beast's articulatory pipes, but the curious public is no longer permitted to divert itself with snatches of its broken melody.

In 1801, Sir Hugh Inglis received from the Company's Resident at Baghdad, Mr. Harford Jones, a stone from Babylon, known familiarly as the "Babylonian Stone": he in turn presented it to the Court, and the Court deposited it in the Library, whence it has recently been transferred to the British Museum, to take its proper place of pride in the great series of Babylonian antiquities there preserved. This stone, the inscription of which was first translated in *Records of the Past*, vol. 5 (First Series), pp. 111-135, being incidentally one of the first Babylonian documents to be deciphered, has always been a popular exhibit: the Company caused a stone plate of its characters to be made, and engraved prints taken from this were distributed to distinguished visitors. In

[1] There seems to be an affinity of spirit between the British public's amusement at this spectacle of the symbol of the enemy's conscientious loathing, and the enthusiasm with which British soldiers sang, during the European War, the notorious German "Hymn of Hate."

this connection it is interesting to read an entry in the *Court Book*, under the date 22 February 1805,[1] which incidentally marks the beginning of the Library's international activities:

> On reading a Letter from Mr Chas Wilkins, Librarian dated this day, laying before the Court a letter he has received from Count Hownzon the Russian Ambassador, communicating in very flattering terms, the Emperor of Russia's acknowledgments for two copies of the Babylonian Inscriptions, which Mr Wilkins had presented thro' His Excellency to the Emperor in the Court's name,
>
> ORDERED That it be referred to the consideration of the Library Committee.

With the inscribed slab came five bricks, which have also been much appreciated by sightseers, for more than a century, as being "the original bricks which the Israelites were compelled to make without straw"!

So disappointing was the reception accorded in India to the Court's Public Dispatch of 25 May 1798, that in a Dispatch to Bengal of 5 June 1805 the following paragraphs were inserted:[2]

> 26. In our Public Letter of the 25th of May 1798, Par. 105, 106, 107 (of which no other notice has been taken, except the Information contained in your Public Letter of the 25th December 1798 "that these Paragraphs had been published for general information") we informed you of our willingness to allot Apartments for the purpose of an Oriental Repository in the additional Buildings then erecting in Leadenhall Street and that all Eastern Manuscripts transmitted to that Repository would be carefully preserved and registered there.
>
> 27. We cannot but express our disappointment that our intentions have not been attended with that success we had reason to expect, and we are sorry to be under the disagree-

[1] *Court Book*, vol. 113 A, p. 1483.
[2] *Bengal Despatches*, vol. 43, pp. 29-40.

able necessity of attributing the failure in some degree to the indifference it has experienced from our Bengal Government, by whom it does not appear that any particular exertions have been made to forward our views.[1]

28. We have now to inform you, that the Apartments for the Oriental Library being completed according to our Intentions, have been placed under the Charge of Mr Charles Wilkins, formerly of our Civil Service in Bengal, and that a considerable number of Manuscripts, and printed Books upon Oriental Subjects, with Objects of Natural History and Curiosity have already been placed in it; among which are many valuable presents from Individuals and Public Bodies in this Country.

29. As our original views in establishing this Library have by no means been abandoned, and we still entertain hopes that the invitation held out to Individuals in India, in the abovementioned paragraphs, would be successful if properly seconded by our Supreme Government, we again refer you to them, and desire that the subject may be entered into with alacrity and zeal.

30. We now call your attention to the Library of the late Tippoo Sultaun which the Captors destined for this House, and which we have always intended should be preserved in the Company's Library. Not having been furnished with a Catalogue in a regular and official manner and but lately with any list whatever, We have hitherto been precluded [from] giving any Instructions upon the subject. We trust however that the whole of the Donation has been reserved for our Orders, which under that impression, we now proceed to give. We observe that according to a specific Catalogue with which we have been privately furnished,[2] there should be a great many Kurans, Shahnamahs, and other Works remarkable for the fineness, and variety of the writ-

[1] This lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Bengal officials was in great measure due to a spirit of local rivalry: the libraries of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and of the College at Fort William—the latter institution had met with bitter opposition in London—appeared to them to be worthier receptacles of oriental manuscripts collected in India, than the unknown Repository in far-off Leadenhall Street.

[2] This refers of course to the subsequently printed C. Stewart: *A descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental Library of the late Tippoo Sultan of Mysore*. Cambridge, 1809.

ing, and the splendor of their illuminations. You will direct that all the Books of this description be selected, whatever may be the number of duplicates together with one Copy of every other Work, whether in prose or verse, [of] which there appears to be a very considerable number and variety, and the whole carefully packed and sent to us by the earliest opportunity; taking care that the Risk be divided by putting the chests on board two or three Ships. You will at the same time transmit a complete Catalogue both in Persian and English, of the whole Library as it was originally found, together with a similar List of those which may be sent home according to these Instructions.

31. As a Series of Coins is a natural useful Appendage to a Library you will direct our Mint and Assay Masters and such other of our Officers as from their situation and Employment, are the most eligible to forward this object to collect choice specimens of all the different Coins of India and the neighbouring Countries, both ancient and modern whether in Gold, silver or Copper, and from time to time, as often as any considerable progress has been made, transmit them to us accompanied by a proper list in English and Persian containing their Legends, the name of the Country where coined or Current, Age or Date, and generally such information as may tend to render them illustrative of History. In issuing these Orders you will understand that however desirous we may be of having them fulfilled, We by no means intend that more should be paid for any particular Piece, than its intrinsic or current value, except in instances where the Coin is curious and rare. You will of course include fair specimens from our own Mints; but we particularly desire that a single piece of each size and Denomination in Gold, Silver and Copper may be selected from the latest Coinage in Calcutta.

32. We understand that several Works particularly on the Languages of India, have been published in Calcutta exclusive of those sent us by the Northampton. As it is proper that our Library should be furnished with every Work which has any Relation to our Affairs, you will not only send us a Copy of every new Book which has since appeared but continue so to do with respect to future Publications of the same nature. Of such new Works as treat of the Languages, you

will send us 40 Copies as they will be useful in our Seminary at home. You will direct that the whole be sent unbound and in sheets just as they come from the Press. Our Librarian not having been able to procure in this Country, a complete set of the Asiatic Researches Calcutta Edition, you will endeavour to send us a good Copy of all the Vols which may have been published with a Copy of the History of India [by] Ghulam Hussayn and translated into English by Ghulam Mustafa as it is not to be procured in this Country.[1]

33. We desire that when the Publications above alluded to contain matters of general information with respect to the Geography resources, or History of India which may appear to you calculated to afford useful information to the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India that you do forward a second Copy of all such Works to us in order that we may have it in our power to present the same to the Board to be placed among their Records.

Action was taken by the Bengal Government on the reception of this letter. The various departments of the administration were circularized, and instructions were issued that the relevant paragraphs should be printed in the *Calcutta Gazette*, and they appeared in the issue of 26 June 1806.[2] This date marks the true beginning of the implementing, in India, of the Court's wishes: thereafter John Company had no cause to complain that his servants in the East were not sufficiently attentive to their master's orders on this head. The arrangements covered by these instructions, for the dispatch of 40 copies of all orientalist publications, had as its eventual and natural consequences that the Librarian became first the distributing, and later the sales agent, not only for such books printed in India as were received in this manner, but also for all books printed in this country under the patronage of the Court.

[1] *A Translation of the Seir Mutaqharin*, Calcutta, 1789 [i.e. the *Siyar al-muta'akhkhirīn* of Ṭabāṭabā'ī (306.32.D.23-25)].

[2] *Bengal Public Consultations*, Range 6, vol. 27, nos. 39-41: it was the Council of the College of Fort William that suggested the publication of the paragraphs, see their Secretary's letter of 7 June 1806.

Fifteen Persian manuscripts were laid before the Court on 2 May 1804, the gifts of Jno Wombwell Esq. and John Kneller Esq., and the Librarian was instructed to present the acknowledgments of the Court to these two benefactors.[1] Later in the same year, the Library's collection of Chinese books was greatly enriched by the donation, on the part of Mr. David Lance, of some hundred volumes.[2]

On 15 May 1805, Wilkins received the first augmentation of his responsibilities and stipend.[3] He was directed to take charge of the maps, charts, drawings, etc., in consideration of which he was awarded an allowance of £100 *per annum*: at the same time, he was appointed "Visitor for Oriental Literature at the College at Hertford with a Salary of £100 pr ann to commence from the time when his attendance shall take place." The latter provision is of great interest, as foreshadowing the opening of the Company's College for its Civil Service probationers. The College was actually opened to receive students on 3 February 1806, upon the following terms:[4]

To pay one hundred guineas per annum, a moiety whereof to be paid at the commencement of each term, there being two in the year, besides the expense of books and stationary.

Students to provide themselves with a table-spoon, tea-spoon, knife and fork, half a dozen towels, and some other small articles, to be mentioned to them at the time of their admission into the College.

Candidates for admission into the College are expected to be well grounded in arithmetic, and qualified to be examined in *Cæsar* and *Virgil*, the *Greek Testament*, and *Xenophon*.

Time for examination and admission to be the week preceding each vacation, viz. Christmas and Midsummer.

Ten guineas to be paid on leaving the College by each student, for the use of the philosophical apparatus, and

[1] *Court Book*, vol. 113, p. 82.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 698.
[3] *Court Book*, vol. 114, p. 124.
[4] *East India Register and Directory*, 1 July 1806, p. xxix.

library, which sum will be applied for the augmentation of both.

No student to be admitted under fifteen years of age.

To the College of Hertford, and later at Haileybury, the Company's Librarian continued to act as Visitor or Examiner, until 1857, when the institution was closed.[1] Relations between the Company's Library and the College were close and cordial: a great number of manuscripts were sent to Haileybury for the instruction of the students, and these were received back in 1860; while surplus copies of books in Indian languages were from time to time sent thither by the Librarian, for the encouragement of deserving scholars.

On 16 July 1806, as the *Day Book* under that date records, the Librarian

Rec^{d} from The Marquis Wellesley 197 Vols of the Arabic and Persian MSS presented by the Army to the Company after the Capture of Seringapatam.

Rec^{d} at the same time 12 MSS to be presented, if the Court approve, to the King and Universities of the United Kingdom.[2]

Gave the Man who brought the above MSS., and who is a confidential Servant of the Marquis that has had charge of them ever since they left Calcutta, One Guinea.

In 1807, the Court departed from its original intention, of not going into "any considerable expense in forming a Collection of Eastern Books,"[3] and voted to pay Mr. Richard Johnson the sum of 3,000 guineas for his collection of oriental manuscripts and drawings. In 1809, the collection belonging to Warren Hastings was bought for the relatively trifling sum of £759 7s. 6d. The Leyden

[1] For a history of the East India College, see *Memorials of Old Haileybury College* (London, 1894), pp. 17-20.

[2] A beautiful copy of the Qur'ān was presented to the King's Library, see *Court Book*, vol. 115 A, p. 1300. For Cambridge's share, see E. G. Browne's *Catalogue*, p. 327, and *Handlist*, p. 142.

[3] See above, p. 11.

manuscripts were purchased in 1824 for £500. These transactions were, however, quite exceptional, and such substantial sums of money were very rarely forthcoming for the purpose of adding to the stock of manuscripts, which gift far more than purchase has augmented to its present remarkable dimensions.

During the year 1807, the Library was enriched by various benefactions, including a volume of poems composed by the King of Persia,[1] and two folio volumes of the natural products of Hindustan, painted under the direction of the Rajah of Tanjore and presented to the Court by Mr. Benjamin Torin.[2]

It is now necessary to turn to consider what staff was available for the administration of this growing department, which had already in this same year swollen to such an extent that the Company's Surveyor was instructed to carry out certain alterations and additions to the Library at an estimated cost of £600.[3] The establishment list of the Company's servants, as published biennially in the *East India Register and Directory*, gives only the name of "Charles Wilkins, Esq. librarian"—after 1806, "Charles Wilkins, Esq. F.R.S.L.L.D. oriental librarian"—until 1813, when the entry "Charles Julius Mickle, clerk under ditto" appears for the first time. But a minute of the Library Committee dated April 1807 shews that the services of a Doorkeeper were expressly appropriated to the Library:

> The Committee having received from Dr Wilkins a satisfactory Account of the conduct of [ ] the Doorkeeper to the Library, recommend that he be allowed a Gratuity of Fifteen Pounds for the past Year, and that the same be paid to him by the Secretary.

Indeed, William Sharland must have been employed in this capacity from the very beginning of the department,

[1] *Court Book*, vol. 116, p. 107.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 311.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 587.

for in the minutes of the Library Committee, dated 11 April 1821, reference is made to the fact that he had then "conducted himself with diligence and fidelity for a period of nearly Twenty Years that he has been in the Company's Service."

The duties of Charles Mickle as Clerk in the Library evidently commenced in 1803, for a letter from Wilkins, recommending him to the favour of the Court, runs:[1]

SIRS,

I beg leave to recommend to your favorable notice Mr Charles J. Mickle who has been employed as an extra Clerk in this Department for upwards of six years, upon his bare Salary of 92£ per annum, without any other emolument whatever. I am happy to certify that he has uniformly conducted himself much to my satisfaction, and that I think him highly worthy of the bounty of his Honorable Employers, either in a Gratuity, or some addition to his Salary.

I am,
Sirs,
Your most obedient
Humble servant
CHAS. WILKINS.

LIBRARY,
10th April 1809

This recommendation was successful in procuring for Mickle a rise in his salary of £10.[2] It was by Mickle's hand that the earliest volumes of the *Day Book* were written.

Sharland remained the guardian of the Library and Museum for thirty years, until his death. In 1821,

The Committee adverting to the additional labour which has devolved on William Sharland, Doorkeeper to the Company's Library, (as brought to their notice in a Petition from that Person) in consequence of the recent alterations & im-

[1] *Miscellaneous Letters Received*, vol. 119 (1809), no. 102.
[2] *Court Book*, vol. 123, p. 263.

provements which have been made in the Library & Museum, and also to the encreased number of visitors who resort thither for the purpose of viewing the same[1]

his salary had been increased by £50 *per annum*. In 1831, Mickle writes in the *Day Book*:

19 Oct. This morning about 8 o'clock died William Sharland, the faithful Messenger of this Library & Museum from its first establishment in 1800.

George Evans succeeded Sharland, at a salary of £90, which rose to £105: he died in 1842.

Charles Mickle did not long outstay Sharland in the Company's service. Early in 1832, he was permitted, on grounds of ill health, to retire. Being then in receipt of a salary of £460 *plus* a gratuity for holidays of £10, he was awarded a pension, at the age of 47, after serving as Clerk in the Library for nearly 29 years, of £300 *per annum*.[2] The Library is indebted to Mickle, apart from faithful and conscientious service during the formative period of its history, for the gift of several printed volumes.

On 5 March 1817, Mr. William Jackson, the Registrar of Indian Records, was permitted to retire, as from the 25th of that month: the Court resolved that the Register Office be put under the superintendence of the Librarian, Mr. George Foot being specially charged with the care and management of the Records.[3] At a Court held on 26 March of the same year, the office of Historiographer, hitherto occupied, largely *in absentia*, by Mr. John Bruce, F.R.S., was summarily abolished,[4] and the Registrar—that is, Wilkins—was ordered to take over the department, his salary being increased from £500 to £700, it being resolved that, should the post of Historiographer

[1] At a Library Committee, 11 April 1821.
[2] At a Committee of Library, 1 and 14 February 1832.
[3] *Court Book*, vol. 124 A, p. 1106.
[4] See W. Foster, *John Company*, p. 243.

ever be revived, Wilkins should hold it.[1] On 8 April, the staff of clerks formerly employed in the Historiographer's office was put under the supervision of the Librarian: Robert Lemon, first Clerk, being offered an increased stipend of £250, rising to £400, in consideration of his relinquishing the appointment held by him in the State Paper Office,[2] on the understanding "that he be not considered as having any claim whatever to succeed to Dr. Wilkins," and Mr. Davies and Mr. Armstrong, extra Clerks under the Historiographer, being also placed at the disposal of the Librarian.[3]

In the *East India Register and Directory* for 1822, the name of Peter Pratt appears for the first time, as an additional Clerk under the Librarian. In 1825, he was awarded a special grant of £50, on the recommendation of Dr. Wilkins, for his services in collecting "a volume of Materials for a History of the Company's former Trade to Japan": Armstrong received a gratuity of £20 at the same time.[4] Armstrong was permitted to retire on 31 March 1831 on a pension of £90, his salary at that time amounting to £186 *per annum*: the reason for his application was ill health, for he had become subject to epileptic fits. In 1827, Pratt was allowed to count his seniority as dating from December 1818[5]: his name disappears from the establishment list in 1836.

Returning to the story of the Library's material growth, in 1809 a valuable present of oriental manuscripts was received from the Gaekwar of Baroda,[6] intended for the Company's College, to which the volumes were in consequence dispatched, to be returned when the College was closed down. In May 1819 the great collection of

[1] *Court Book*, vol. 124 A, pp. 1180-1.
[2] This provision, however, fell through; see W. Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 244.
[3] *Court Book*, vol. 124 A, p. 1232.
[4] At a Committee of Library, 30 March 1825.
[5] At a Committee of Library, 21 February 1827.
[6] The gift was accompanied by a letter in Persian, now located as Persian MS. 4253.

Sanskrit manuscripts belonging to Mr. H. T. Colebrooke was added to the Library, without doubt the finest and most precious benefaction which the Library has ever received from any individual. Later in the same year, 32 oriental manuscripts, presented the previous year by Lieutenant J. H. Peile, were sent to Haileybury, in accordance with the donor's wishes. In 1823, the volumes comprising the Mackenzie Collection were placed in the Library. In 1824, Leyden's manuscripts were bought and deposited. In 1825, further Mackenzie and Colebrooke volumes were received: in 1827, Taylor's Bequest, consisting of Sanskrit and Marathi manuscripts, came in. The printed books collection was similarly growing apace, supplemented by valuable early Indian lithographs and prints. The rapid expansion of the Museum, which cannot be treated in detail in this sketch, confined as it is in design to the history of the Library only, must nevertheless be touched on lightly, in another chapter, since it profoundly affected the development of this institution.

§ 3

THE public nature of the institution, which the Court's resolution of 1801 had called into being, appears to have been recognized from its very inception. It is a little obscure, how and by what authority members of the public obtained access to the Library: but with the increasing congestion on its space—the plans of 1799 allowed only one room for the whole collection—and the consequent increase in administrative work, which had of course been still further augmented by the new responsibilities which in the year 1817 were thrown upon the Librarian's shoulders, the incessant series of interruptions, which the unregulated admission of the public necessarily entailed, became a serious nuisance; and, for all Wilkins' enthusiasm for educating the uninstructed in the culture, resources and amenities of Indian civilization, he was at last compelled to call a halt. A Committee of Library, held on 16 July 1817, for the first time formulated regulations for the admission of visitors, as is recorded in the minutes of that day:

> The Committee have had under consideration a letter from Doctor Wilkins, the Company's Librarian, stating that the current Business of his department has of late been greatly impeded by the immense crowds of persons of all classes, who by various means obtain leave to visit the Library & Museum, every day in the week except Sunday; and submitting that a set of regulations be established under which the curiosity of the Public may be liberally gratified, and many other inconveniences beside the one abovementioned obviated.
>
> And the Committee being of opinion that it is expedient to adopt the measures recommended by Doctor Wilkins, submit to the Court that the following regulations be accordingly established, viz:—

1. That the Library be open for the inspection of Visitors on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from ten till three (except in extraordinary cases).
2. That the general authority for admission be a Letter to Doctor Wilkins or Ticket signed by a Director who will insert the date, the name of the Person to whom granted, & the number of those who may wish to accompany him.
3. That the Ticket be printed and of the following form[1]

> "To the Doorkeeper of the Honorable the East India "Company's Library at the House in Leadenhall Street;
>
> > "Amit [*sic*] the Bearer Mr. —— and Party of " Friends on Monday, Thursday, or Saturday "between the Hours of ten and three," dated the—

4. That the Librarian be also empowered to issue Tickets, and admit Persons, distinguished by rank or science, as formerly according to his discretion.
5. That when persons of extraordinary high rank appoint a day to honor the Library with a visit the Librarian may refuse admission to others on the day so appointed, during the stay of such noble visitors, giving as much notice to the Grantees of Tickets as the case will admit and minuting the cause of such proceeding.
6. That a Book be opened in the Library in which the Grantee of a Ticket shall be required to subscribe his name and place of abode, together with the number of the Persons of his Party.[2]
7. That a Ticket shall not be transferable by the original Grantee.
8. That there be no relaxation of these rules, except in extraordinary cases to be judged of only by a Director or the Librarian in his place.

[1] The frequency with which large orders for the printing of such tickets were thereafter placed, as recorded in the *Day Book*, testifies further to the popularity of the institution.

[2] This is the beginning of the keeping of the "Visitors' Book," a practice which still continues.

These regulations were amended in 1838, in response to an application on the part of Joseph Hume Esq., M.P., as the following letter shows:[1]

East India House
the 15*th May* 1838.

Sir,

The Court of Directors of the East India Company have had under consideration your letter addressed to the Chairman dated the 12th ultimo:

In reply I am commanded to inform you that although the Museum in this House does not come under the denomination of a Public Institution, the Court feel happy in consenting to its being opened to the inspection of the Public so far as may be practicable with reference to the business transacted under the same roof; and that from the 1st June next, visitors will be admitted without Tickets on Saturdays in every week (excepting during the month of September in each year[2]) between the hours of Eleven and Three.

I have the honor to be
Sir &ca.
(Signed) James C. Melvill
Secretary.

This extension of privileges to the general public was followed a few months later by a decision to limit the days of admission by ticket to Mondays and Thursdays only.[3] In the above provision may be seen the origin of the present custom of admitting, on Saturday afternoons, by prior arrangement, suitable parties of the general public to view the contents of the Library.

The earliest reference to any application for the loan of the Library's manuscripts is contained in a Minute of the Library Committee, dated 26 March 1811, at which it was

[1] Approved Court, 9 May 1838.

[2] During September the Library and Museum were closed for cleaning, stocktaking, and similar purposes: this very necessary period of intermission is now shorn to a fortnight.

[3] At a Finance and Home Committee, 31 October 1838.

ORDER'D That the request of Sir John Kennaway Bart for permission to borrow from the Co's Library a Persian work entitled *Maser Ul Amra* to enable him to revise and correct a translation he formerly made of some select parts of it promising to take the greatest care of the same and to see it punctually returned be complied with.

ORDER'D That Major C. Stewart be permitted to have the use of any books from the Co's Library.

Sir John Kennaway's work on the *Ma'āthir al-umarā'*[1] does not appear ever to have come to anything: Major Stewart's *History of Bengal*, however, published in 1813, records in its Preface the use made by the author of the Company's printed and manuscript resources, and Stewart was further so obliging as to provide a list of the authorities which he consulted in writing his book.

A still earlier record of the loan of manuscripts is, however, preserved in the *Day Book*, in which the following entries occur, under the year 1810:

March 15th Sent to his Excellency the Persian Ambassador the following Persian Manuscripts—

Alam Arāyī Abāsī 3 Vols in 2. Ret^d.
Negaristān Ret^d.
Tarīkh-i-Wasāf. Retained May 1810.

May 24th Ret^d. by his Excellency the Persian Ambassador, Nine Persian MSS. The Tarikh-i-Wasāf is still retained.

NB. His Excellency has retained it by mistake, & carried it with him into Persia—Oct^r. 11th 1812.

The lost manuscript has never been recovered: fortunately, this is the only occasion on which the liberal policy of loans, which the Company initiated and the state administration of the Library continued, has had

[1] This biographical dictionary of the great Amīrs of the Moghul Empire was translated by H. Beveridge, and published in the *Bibliotheca Indica* of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

such untoward consequences, apart from certain losses which resulted from misadventure.[1]

The growth of the institution, and the importance which it had already assumed in the popular esteem, is further illustrated by the Minutes of a meeting of the Library Committee held on 11 March 1818, when, on reading a letter from the Librarian

> submitting, that with the view of giving greater accommodation for the depositing the variety of works which have greatly accumulated, as also of displaying certain details of Natural History which have not been arranged for want of sufficient space, some alterations by which these objects can be attained, and which will contribute to make the Library and Museum more worthy the attention of the numerous visitors, amongst whom are to be mentioned Persons of rank and Science of all Nations,

the Committee resolved to refer the matter to the consideration of the joint committees of Library and House.

The contents of the Museum must indeed have been threatening to burst their confines. Cases full of specimens of natural objects—botanical, mineral, animal, entomological—arrived at regular intervals from the Company's stations in India, Malaya, and even China: quite apart from the bewildering assortment of objects received from individual donors. Some of these latter exhibits must have been highly entertaining, as well as instructive. Particularly gruesome is the image conjured up by the following entry in the *Day Book* for 8 September 1837 :

> Received from the Secretary—Presented to the Museum by H. H. Spry, Esqr M.D.—
>
> The skull of Makun a Thug Chief: accompanied by a Memorandum describing the execution of this Chief with 25 of his Accomplices.

[1] A parcel of four volumes of Sanskrit manuscripts, valued at £6, was lost when the S.S. *Batavier*, which was taking them to Germany for use in Berlin, foundered in December 1903.

In another place we read of a "monstrous birth," sent in a case from Canton: alas! when the case was opened, the precious specimen was found to be reduced to dust. Snakes in spirits, Moghul armour, massive sculptures, figurines of Hindu deities—the contents of the collection rapidly became as vast as they were heterogeneous. It was early found necessary to make other provisions for the custody of certain sections for which space could not be found at India House: to the Museum of the Linnean Society was transferred the Company's Herbarium, and in 1833, as the *Day Book* records, a catalogue of this collection was received into the Library.[1] The eventual disruption of the Museum will be described in another context: here may be mentioned the somewhat anomalous preservation in the Library of many works on Natural History, which were acquired during the years when the Museum was still in being; among these are fine series of folio volumes of paintings representative of Indian botanical and zoological varieties. Insofar, however, as these works relate to the natural history of India and the East, they still remain very much within the scope of the Library, and are frequently consulted.

One far-reaching consequence of this growth of the Museum was the appointment, during 1820, of a Curator, to take special charge, under the Librarian's general supervision, of this side of the department. The man chosen for this new appointment was Dr. T. Horsfield, a scientist of established reputation. Born at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, on 12 May 1773, of Moravian parents, Horsfield graduated as a doctor at the Pennsylvania Hospital in 1798: the following year he went to Java, and took service under the Dutch government, there and at Sumatra. The English in 1811 temporarily took possession of the Dutch colonies in Malaya, and Horsfield

[1] Presumably N. Wallich's lithographed *Catalogue*, now located as MSS. Eur. G. 32: see Kaye's *Catalogue of Manuscripts*, no. 393.

transferred his allegiance to the British flag. After some years of extremely important and meritorious work, undertaken at the instance of Sir Stamford Raffles, he retired from the East Indies in 1819. In 1820, his appointment to the Museum in Leadenhall Street continued his connection with the Company, and in this post he remained until his death in 1859. He was the author of numerous learned publications on botany and zoology, including catalogues of the mammals, birds and lepidoptera contained in the Company's Museum.

To return to the story of the Library: the publication at Lucknow in 1822 of the celebrated Persian dictionary, the *Haft qulzum* ("Seven Seas"), compiled by, and printed at the expense of Ḥaidar Kh̲ān, afterwards styled Sh̲āh i Zamān, King of Oudh, provided the Library with a stock of valuable volumes suitable for distribution among the various learned societies and institutions of Europe. One of the recipients of the Company's favour was the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, recently founded (in 1818) at Bonn: a letter of appreciation and thanks, signed by A. G. de Schlegel, the Rector of the University, was received by the Court in 1825,[1] from which the following passages deserve to be quoted:

MESSIEURS

Nous avons reçu par l'intermédiaire du Ministère Royal de l'instruction publique dans la monarchie Prussienne un exemplaire du Dictionnaire Persan composé par S.M. le Roi d'Oude et imprimé à ses frais dans sa résidence de Lucknow. Ce travail, auquel un monarque Indien a voué ses loisirs, est une preuve brillante de l'émulation pour la culture des lettres que l'exemple du Gouvernement Britannique et des savans Anglois dans l'Inde a excité parmi les indigènes. . .

Un ouvrage Sanscrit, le premier sur le continent de l'Europe, a déjà été imprimé à Bonn; d'autres sont annoncés et paraîtront prochainement. Nous nous flattons donc que

[1] *Miscellaneous Letters Received*, vol. 157 (1825, 2).

les travaux de quelques uns de nos professeurs en ce genre, pourront mériter l'attention de cette illustre Compagnie dont Vous dirigez les affaires, et pour laquelle son vaste empire dans l'Inde fait de l'avancement des études asiatiques un objet d'une si haute importance.

In so high esteem was the liberal cultural policy of the Company held abroad: and by such courtesies was established the arrangement for the interchange of publications whereby the Library derives great and constant benefit.

Wilkins was now fast becoming an old man. From an unpleasant incident which occurred in 1835, it would appear that his advanced years had, not unnaturally, impaired somewhat the efficiency and firm grasp of affairs which had characterized him as a younger man. In April of that year, Peter Gordon, a traveller and writer of moderate consequence, having secured a ticket of admission to the Library from P. Auber, the Secretary of the Court, duly presented himself at the door of the apartment. His experiences and reactions are adequately elaborated in a letter which he subsequently wrote[1]

To the Chairman
of the East India Company
Islington 24th April 1835.

Sir,

I beg leave to state that yesterday I availed myself of Mr. Auber's ticket of admission to the Museum at the India House, and was shewn through a small room and a closet crowded with Trophies won by British arms in India, and through the oriental Library, which I was told contains about six thousand volumes of Oriental Manuscripts, besides an uncertain number of printed Books and European Manuscripts, relative to India. Some tattered loose leaves, in manuscript, were shewn as the Catalogue of the Museum; I inquired for the Catalogue of the Library, and was informed that it is not printed; but even a torn manuscript Catalogue,

[1] Copy in *Minutes, Finance and Home*: 1832 to 1835.

of this most interesting portion of the Collection, was not produced. Two Orientalists were at their Studies amidst the *interruptions* of the Visitors. Such is the use made of Six thousand volumes of oriental manuscripts and of the rest of the Library, maintained at a cost exceeding £10,000 per annum.

I asked to see the medals prints and Charts, and was informed that my Ticket did not admit me to them for they are not shewn on the public days; and only on express application to the Chairman as the prints have been injured by the public and the coins are not arranged.

On enquiring for the Mackenzie Collection I was shewn one manuscript, in a glass Case, as the only portion exhibited, and was referred to Doctor Horsfield, for further information. I stated to the Doctor, that I wished to ascertain the actual situation of the Mackenzie Collection, with reference to its having been rendered accessible to the public, and that I had handed to Mr Hawes the statements publicly made by Captain Gowan, which I believe have not been contradicted. The Doctor replied, that the Collection is partly in Calcutta, and partly in the India House; that the portion in the India House is unpacked, but that no person except himself is acquainted with it, and that Captain Harkness is occupied on it, almost every day. He said it is out of his power to grant me access to it or to the Library; that I could obtain access only by application to the Chairman. I replied that some months since I applied for access to the Library, and was *refused*: that my present object is, the opening of the India House to the Public, as a second National Museum, as the House, in common with the Warehouses, is in the *market*.

I request to be allowed to inspect the Medals, prints, charts, sea-journals, record offices, proprietor's reading room, and the Mackenzie Collection, in order to ascertain the situation of these Collections. I also request as constant and free access to the translated documents of Colonel Mackenzie which relate to Countries south of the Coleroon, as I enjoy to the entire Library at the British Museum. It would be uncandid not to say, that, in making these requests, I feel that I am not asking favors, for the administration ought surely to be conducted as by the Trustees of the British Museum.

In the Library, I took down a Book and found the dust of the white ants had not been brushed from its leaves: this confirms the current report that Manuscripts are perishing for want of care.

Peter Gordon visited the Library again on the first of June, and was then so magnanimous as to present a copy of his *Fragment of the Journal of a Tour through Persia in* 1820 (London, 1833). But *timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*: he was boding no good to the hospitable institution which had fully and freely accorded him privileges never withheld from any responsible and properly accredited member of the public. On 30 June he wrote another letter to the Court, enclosing a copy of a printed pamphlet entitled *The Oriental Repository at the India House.*[1] In this effusion he returned with gusto and not a little venom to the charges of inefficiency and carelessness adumbrated in his letter of 24 April. In particular he complains of the inadequacy of the Library's collection of Chinese Books,[2] adding on this subject:[3]

There never was a moment when it was so necessary for this nation to know what Chinese literature it possesses; and when it was of so much consequence to place it to the best advantage. The vile monopoly of intercourse is abolished. Britain now permits her merchants and her missionaries to visit China, and, at the same time, the State ceases to educate youth, at the public expense, for carrying on the intercourse of licensed persons in licensed ships. All the Chinese Records of the late United Company, naturally fall into the hands of his Majesty's Foreign Secretary, and all the Libraries being Commercial Assets are, by the Act, ordered for sale without delay; however, we trust that both the Records and the Libraries will, like the splendid gift of George the Third,

[1] A copy is preserved in the British Museum (824. f. 50, P. 26038).
[2] China has always presented a difficulty to the administration of the Library: considerations of economy and restriction of scope have limited this side of the collection to its present fragmentary state.
[3] P. 9.

be opened to the public, and be placed under the care of liberal, intelligent, and active keepers. Such a measure will prove to be radically conservative.

The Court was angered by this gratuitous, and, as it seemed, unsolicited attack, and instructed the Secretary to inform Gordon that his ticket of admission had been cancelled. Gordon then unloosed the full flood of his wrath. After quoting the letter of cancellation, he adds some further pages to his pamphlet, castigating the administration of the Company in terms which leave little doubt that his attack was largely inspired by political motives: the Company was at that time, after the Act of 1833, already under sentence of death, and the hounds were in full cry. A few of Gordon's quips are worth quoting here.

If the Directors had consulted the dial of their own House, they would have seen, that, this is not the hour of the Censor but the hour of the Reformer; that, this is not the day on which they can expel a reader with ignominy, from a national library, because he reports what he sees and knows of it; but, that, it is the day, in which, having sold to the nation a library, which always was public property, they must open it to the public. . .

Cost whatever it may, we shall continue to tell all that we know, and to say all that we think, about the national collection at the India House. It is, without doubt and beyond all comparison, the most valuable collection of Oriental manuscripts in existence, whether in Europe or in Asia; however, it is all but absolutely closed against the public, and especially against Britons. . . Indeed, there is no preparation made, or accommodation provided for students; the library consists of three rooms; one is occupied by Sir Charles Wilkins, another by Dr. Horsfield, and the principal room is exhibited to the visitors of the museum. . . It is a very pleasing sight to see the venerable Orientalist visit the Repository which has been formed under his care; but surely it is the duty of the Directors to provide efficient assistants

for him; this they have not done; on the late reduction of the establishment, he gave up two clerks, not because he did not want clerks, but because he did not want those he had: a naturalist may be in his element in a museum, shewing butterflies to the Directors and to the other dowagers of the corporations of London; but a linguist, an antiquary should be appointed to assist the superannuated librarian in taking care of the manuscripts and books, and in preparing the antiquities and medals for the inspection of the public. . . Of course, as soon as the library is opened to the public, the Directors' families will cease to take their chocolate in it. . .

Warren Hastings hung Nundcomar by means of a grand jury, of which the Company's own Mr. Grant was the foreman; and the same worthy sold the books which he collected in India to his own honorable masters by means of a Court of Directors, of which the Company's own Mr. Grant was chairman; by these steps up the ladder of corruption, Mr. Grant's heir was mounted at the head of the Board of Control, and compromised with the Company, taking their unexamined, uncatalogued, commercial assets, and giving them a guarantee dividend of £630,000 per annum. Thus the father bought the books for the Company, and the son bought them for the Crown. . . The Oriental Repository was founded less than forty years ago; however, its founders have sold it for a mess of pottage. . .

Wilkins died the following year, on 13 May 1836, after an attack of influenza brought on by a cold. Since his appointment to the charge of the Library, thirty-five years before, honours as well as responsibilities had fallen fast upon him. Already in 1788 he had been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society: foreign academies likewise conferred distinctions upon him, and he was made an Associate of the Institut de France. Oxford made him an honorary Doctor of Civil Law on 26 June 1805: in 1825, the Royal Society of Literature presented him with the royal medal, bearing the inscription *Carolo Wilkins Literaturæ Sanscritæ Principi.* The foundation of the Royal Asiatic Society, in 1823, owed much to



SIR CHARLES WILKINS, F.R.S.: LIBRARIAN, 1801-1836.
Engraved by J. Sartain, after painting by J. G. Middleton.

Wilkins' enthusiastic support,[1] and the Company subscribed 100 guineas annually to its funds. In 1833, at the suggestion of the Rt. Hon. C. W. Williams-Wynn, President of the Society, and the Earl of Munster, Wilkins was knighted, and received the insignia of the Guelphic Order.

His publications included a celebrated Sanskrit grammar,[2] a new edition of Richardson's *Persian, Arabic and English Dictionary*,[3] and a monograph on the *Radicals of the Sanskrita Language*.[4] The record of his borrowings from the Library preserved in the *Day Book* shows that he retained full intellectual vigour and scholarly interests to the last. The very detailed and admirable notice of him printed in the *Asiatic Journal* for 1836, to which reference has already been made,[5] and which was written by his friend and admirer, Sir Graves Chamney Haughton, sums up his character and achievements in the following terms:[6]

> Sound common sense was the characteristic of Sir C. Wilkins' understanding; and he never gave way to those flights of fancy, which tend to mislead men from the sober results of the judgment,—a quality which he possessed in an eminent degree. He was playful and agreeable in those moments when he unbent from business; and his sallies were at once lively and happily expressed. His friends were always sure of a kind reception; and his hospitality was suited to his position in life, and the numerous claims of friendship. To the many applications, often of the most inconsiderate nature, to which his official station rendered him peculiarly liable,

[1] H. T. Colebrooke was the actual founder, see *Centenary Volume* (London, 1923), p. vii. The institution was recommended in Wilkins' "Sketch" quoted above, p. 18.

[2] London, 1808: the official text-book of the Company's College.

[3] Printed for the Company in 1806.

[4] Published in 1815: a fragment of a Sanskrit vocabulary by Wilkins is preserved in MSS. Eur. D. 130.

[5] Above, p 14.

[6] P. 170.

he shewed every attention that was consistent with the conscientious discharge of his duties.

It has seldom fallen to the lot of any individual to have enjoyed so many advantages. Uniform health, with the exception of the temporary derangement of the system which brought him from India, high reputation, easy circumstances, an affectionate family, and a large circle of attached friends, may be said to have made his life a round of rational and social enjoyment. . .

Eminently has this venerable scholar fulfilled the injunction of the Arabian poet, who has said, so happily and feelingly—

> "Be a tale worthy of remembrance;
> For truly the life of man is but a tale."

An engraved portrait of Wilkins was made in 1830, which we are assured is exceptionally vivid and life-like: there is also preserved in the Library a monochrome sketch, which appears to be closely related with this portrait.[1]

Wilkins was twice married. His first wife presumably succumbed to the malady from which we find her suffering already in 1796: his second wife pre-deceased him by a few months only. By his first wife he had two daughters, and a third by his second wife: one of these was married to Wilkins' life-long friend, the noted numismatist William Marsden, who also died in 1836. Wilkins' family presented to the Library his collection of oriental manuscripts, a useful addition to its Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit resources: these were received on 26 July 1837.

The death of the Company's Librarian necessitated a new appointment, and a Committee of Finance and Home being charged to report upon the matter, on 6 July 1836 recommended[2]

that Professor Wilson be appointed the Company's Librarian and Examiner in the Oriental Department, with a Salary of

[1] MSS. Eur. C. 30, fol. 47. [2] *Court Book*, vol. 147, p. 333.

£500 pr Annum, and that the Company's Museum be placed under the charge of Dr Horsfield, with an allowance of £500 per Annum, instead of that of One Guinea pr diem which he now receives.

This recommendation met with unexpected opposition. A member of the Court proposed, as an amendment, that

the Court deem it to be highly desirable that the situation of Librarian should be filled by an individual who possesses a general knowledge of the Oriental Languages and who being free from any other engagements can devote his whole time and attention to the various duties connected with the appointment and that every practicable saving should be effected consistent with a due regard to efficiency.

That accordingly Sir Graves Chamney Haughton whose high character as an Oriental Scholar is universally acknowledged and who from the situation he has already filled appears to be peculiarly qualified for the discharge of the duties performed by Sir Charles Wilkins be appointed the Company's Librarian and Public Examiner in the Oriental Department of the Individuals nominated for the Civil Service of the Company and of the Cadets at the Military Seminary, and that adverting to the amount of the retired pension now drawn by Sir Graves Haughton he be allowed a Salary of £300 pr Annum.

A ballot was held in Court on 13 July 1836, and the original recommendations of the Committee were adopted.[1]

There can be little doubt, that the Court's decision was a wise one. The demur about "absentee landlordism" proved to be quite groundless, for the arrangement worked admirably for 24 years, until the death of Wilson. Moreover, Haughton did not enjoy the most vigorous of health—it was on grounds of "the lamentable state of his

[1] *Court Book*, vol. 147, pp. 373-5. An additional proviso was made "that during the occasional absences of Professor Wilson, Dr. Horsfield be required to take charge of the Library as well as Museum."

health" that he was allowed to retire from his Professorship at Haileybury in 1827—and in his later years he lived abroad, dying of cholera at St. Cloud in 1849.[1]

Horace Hayman Wilson was born in London on 26 September 1786. He studied medicine at St. Thomas's Hospital, and in 1808 was nominated an assistant-surgeon on the Bengal establishment of the East India Company. On the six months' voyage out, he learnt Urdu; his proficiency in metallurgy led to his appointment, on arrival, as assistant to John Leyden at the Calcutta mint, and he became assay-master in 1816. Meanwhile he took up the study of Sanskrit, inspired, as he himself declared, by the example of Sir William Jones,[2] and already in 1813, after only five years' residence in India, he published his first Sanskrit work, an annotated text of Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta*. In 1819 appeared the first edition of his *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, a production which, with the improvements incorporated into its second edition of 1831, remained the standard work on Sanskrit etymology, until it was superseded by the great German lexicon of 1875. In 1832, after years of extremely valuable service to the cause of Sanskrit learning in India, during which he acted as secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Wilson was appointed to the Chair of Sanskrit at Oxford, which Joseph Boden had founded in 1827. We see, in his career in India, a remarkable similarity to that of John Leyden: Leyden likewise went out as a surgeon, he likewise had control of the Calcutta mint, he likewise turned to good account his literary and linguistic talents by embarking on the study of Indian languages; but he, alas! as we shall later see, had the

[1] It seems unlikely that Haughton can really have countenanced the *démarche* in his favour: he withdrew his candidature for the Boden Chair at Oxford so that Wilson might have an unimpeded course to election: see *D.N.B.*, vol. xxv, p. 167.
[2] *D.N.B.*, vol. lxii, p. 98.

misfortune to die young, a victim to the climate and his own zeal for research.

Such were the achievements which already stood to the credit of Professor Wilson, when the Court appointed him successor to the great Sir Charles Wilkins: and no unworthy successor he proved. During his librarianship, the position which the Library had already won in the world of learning was fully consolidated, and still further advanced. The arrangements which had been made at the time of his appointment, whereby Horsfield was given absolute control of the Museum, and equal privilege with the Librarian of issuing tickets of admission to suitable applicants,[1] left the Library unencumbered by the rapidly increasing accumulation of Museum exhibits. The physical separation of the two departments must have taken place about this time, and thereafter the Museum, as it encroaches more and more on the floor-space of the East India House, sending out its tentacles in all directions, ceases to have any real connection with the Library, save that of contiguity and common origin. Other administrative changes occurred simultaneously: the maps and charts ceased to form part of the Librarian's charge, and were put into the capable hands of Mr. Walker, who had already done much useful work upon them.[2] The retirement in 1835 of Peter Pratt, who was the clerk specially charged with the arrangement of the Records of the Company, resulted in this work being discontinued, and presumably the Librarian's function as Registrar also ceased then, though the actual documents themselves appear to have remained in the Librarian's custody until 1858.[3]

[1] At a Finance and Home Committee, 18 January 1837.

[2] At a Finance and Home Committee, 16 November 1836, on a reference from Dr. Horsfield, who was doubtless then acting for the Librarian: following a decision taken by the Court on 15 June 1836.

[3] See W. Foster, *A Guide to the India Office Records* (London, 1919), p. v.

§ 4

At almost the same time as the events which we have described towards the end of the last chapter were taking place, a decision regarding British educational policy in India had been taken which had the most far-reaching consequences; and as the Library of the East India Company was itself inevitably affected, however slightly, by this decision, it is material to the present narrative to make a passing reference to it here.

In 1834, a fierce controversy arose between the various members composing the Committee of Public Instruction in Calcutta, relating to the most advantageous policy to be followed in promoting educational activity in India. The quarrel arose over the sums of money appropriated to the advancement of Arabic and Sanskrit learning, the immediate issue being a request by Government for the formulation of a curriculum for a proposed College at Agra. Colleges had already been opened at Benares, Calcutta, Delhi and Allahabad, and not only were the professors paid by Government, but students— "lazy and stupid school boys of 30 and 35 years of age"[1] —were subsidized to take the courses, based on Arabic and Sanskrit learning, which were taught there. Half of the Committee now revolted against the spending of public moneys for the encouragement of what, in their opinion, were worthless and antiquated subjects: these partisans of an English basis for education in India were dubbed "Anglicists," while their opponents, the supporters of the ancient learning of the country, were called "Orientalists." Into this bitter controversy entered Macaulay, the great historian, who had been

[1] H. Woodrow, *Macaulay's Minutes on Education in India* (Calcutta, 1862), p. 4.

appointed on his arrival in India as President of the Committee. The case was argued back and forth before him, and on 2 February 1834 he wrote a minute which was destined to attain very great celebrity, and which convinced Lord William Bentinck, then Governor-General, that the cause of the Anglicists was the right one. Thereafter the English language, and English literature, became the keystone of British educational policy in India; and Arabic and Sanskrit studies suffered in consequence.

Looking back on a battle which raged a century ago, it is possible now to appraise the motives and assess the wisdom of the two contesting parties, in the light of subsequent history. Such an enquiry would be superfluous here: but it is certainly pertinent to remark on the extraordinary harshness—to us no stronger term—of Macaulay's statements, and to lament that the counsels of men such as Wilkins, Jones and Colebrooke had not been available at the time, to moderate the judgment which that great man, with all the weight of his reputation, in his admitted ignorance[1] passed on the literatures of Islam and the Hindus. "I am quite ready," he says, "to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia."[2]

The closing of the College at Fort William quickly followed this decision: if Arabic and Sanskrit were not studies worthy of the serious attention of Government, there could be no possible justification for requiring Civil Service Probationers to become qualified in them. The oriental manuscripts of the College were consequently dispersed, and a proportion of them was sent

[1] Macaulay writes, "I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic" (*op. cit.*, p. 107).
[2] *Ibid.*

to England, and now forms part of the India Office Library's collections. The printing of oriental texts at Government expense also ceased: henceforward, private enterprise must be the hazardous successor of official patronage, and the cheap lithograph replaces the careful print.

In view of these events, it is perhaps a little surprising that the Company's Library survived: fortunately, the spirit of liberal culture still breathed in Leadenhall Street, and the Library's international repute, moreover, was already so high, and its treasures so widely celebrated, that any proposal for its abolition or dispersion would have been met by a great outcry from the world of scholarship.

Under Wilson's guidance, the Library gained a new utility. Its books were catalogued, and these catalogues printed;[1] its coins were arranged, the Librarian's skill and inc[illegible] this task meeting with the special [illegible] Court of Directors.[2] Thus were removed some of the reproaches which had been levelled by Peter Gordon.

The subsequent history of the Library is partly told by the account, given in the next section, of the various collections with which its resources have from time to time been enriched. Wilson lived long enough to see the transfer of the Library from the Company to the Crown. The suppression of the Indian Mutiny was immediately followed, in 1858, by the creation of a new state department, the India Office, and to the Secretary of State for India in Council were entrusted all the powers and all the material possessions formerly enjoyed by the authorities at Leadenhall Street. The East India House was itself put into the market, sold, and demolished. The Library was temporarily removed to

[1] *A Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company*, London, 1845: *A Supplement to the Catalogue . . .*, London, 1851.

[2] At a Court of Directors held on 29 December 1837.

mises in Cannon Row: while the Museum, which had been even further enormously enlarged by the acquisition of objects displayed at the Paris Exhibition of 1855, was given accommodation in Fife House, Whitehall.

Wilson died on 8 May 1860, at the age of 74. He had been Director of the Royal Asiatic Society since 1837, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1834: many foreign academies and institutions had also favoured him with their recognition. Several portraits of Wilson are in existence, including one, by James Atkinson, in the National Portrait Gallery; a bust by Chantrey is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and there is another bust on the façade of the India Office. His publications are extremely numerous, and his Collected Works, in twelve volumes, were published at London (1826-71) under the editorship of one of his successors, Reinhold Rost. Wilson made a fine collection of Sanskrit manuscripts, and bequeathed it to the Bodleian Library.

On 5 April 1838 William Miller, a Writer in the Warehouses, was transferred to the Library, and was there allowed the same salary of 22/6 per week which he had previously received: augmentations of 10/- per week were sanctioned successively in 1840 and 1846. In 1858, Miller was placed on the Establishment of the Library with a salary of £150 *per annum*, "at the recommendation of Prof. Wilson and the late Dr. Royle."[1] After Professor Wilson's death, and before the appointment of his successor, Miller acted as Librarian, doing much valuable work during this critical transition period; his services were duly rewarded by his being designated Assistant Librarian on 17 January 1867, he being the first incumbent of this post. Miller retired in the summer of 1872, after 34 years of highly meritorious service. He had the satisfaction of seeing his son, Arthur

[1] At a Court of Directors held on 12 January 1858. Dr, Royle, Curator of the Museum, had died ten days earlier.

Miller, engaged, at first on a temporary basis, in connection with the work of transferring the contents of the Library from Cannon Row. The son had a no less remarkable connection with the Library than the father. First employed in 1867, he was in 1886 made a Second Class Clerk, and in 1891 promoted to the Higher Grade, retiring with that rank in 1919. Father and son between them served the Library, and served it well, for no less than 86 years. Arthur Miller was awarded the Imperial Service Order, and an excellent photograph of him hangs in the Librarian's room.[1]

In 1861, Dr. James Robert Ballantyne was appointed Librarian. Ballantyne had gone out to India in 1845, on Wilson's own recommendation, to reorganize the Government Sanskrit College at Benares. While on service there, he undertook an ambitious programme of translations and monographs the avowed purpose of which was to interpret Hindu thought to the West, and conversely to familiarize the Brahmins with European philosophical ideas. A number of publications on various Indian languages, including Urdu, Hindi and Marathi, had already been produced by Ballantyne in England before his Indian career began: in all, no fewer than sixteen items are listed in the bibliography contained in his notice in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (vol. iii, pp. 81-2).

After guiding the destinies of the Benares College for sixteen years, Ballantyne in 1861 resigned his posts as Principal and Professor of Moral Philosophy, and returned to England. He was immediately designated to succeed Wilson, and his earlier career gave every reason to suppose that his librarianship would be fully as distinguished as that of his two predecessors. But unfortunately his health was already failing, and on 16

[1] Almost equally remarkable was the service of Mr. G. H. Baker, who retired from the post of Head Messenger in the Library in 1931 after more than 47 years' service. Another family succession is represented in the person of one of the present Messengers.

February 1864 he died, after serving less than three years. His Sanskrit manuscripts were acquired by the Library at a cost of £87.

In his place was appointed Professor Fitzedward Hall. Born at Troy, New York, Hall had entered Harvard in 1846, at the age of 21, but had not yet "commenced" when he was sent out to India by his family in pursuit of a runaway brother. Wrecked off the Ganges, Hall was compelled to stay awhile in India, and ended by seeking his career there. After studying several languages at Calcutta, including Persian and Sanskrit, in 1850 he went to Benares, where three years later he was appointed Professor of Sanskrit and English. He served as a rifleman during the Indian Mutiny, having filled various posts in the educational service. During a visit to Europe, he received the honorary degree of D.C.L. at Oxford in 1860: two years later he retired from India, and was appointed to various professorships at King's College, London. In 1864 he succeeded Ballantyne at Cannon Row, and continued as Librarian until 1869, when he resigned in order to devote himself entirely to his philological studies. In his later years he gave great assistance to Sir James Murray in the preparation of the *Oxford Dictionary*. A very long bibliography of his published works is given in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (Second Supplement, vol. ii, p. 188). Hall was made an honorary Doctor of Laws at Harvard in 1895, to which university he gave during his lifetime a most valuable collection of Sanskrit manuscripts. He died in Suffolk in 1901, and his ashes were interred in his native town of Troy. It is natural that Hall contributed little to the development of the India Office Library during his five years of office. It was at the end of this period, in 1869, that the Library was removed from its temporary home in Cannon Row to the newly erected India Office in Westminster, its permanent abode: and thither also were transferred the contents of

the Museum, to be housed most uncomfortably side by side with the Library on the third floor.

The Library had had two librarians during the first sixty years of its existence: now, within nine years, two more had come and gone, and there was urgent need of reconstruction. At this critical moment in its history came the man who, more possibly than any other, before or since, left the impress of his administrative ability and linguistic genius on the institution.

Reinhold Rost was born at Eisenburg in Saxen-Altenburg on 2 February 1822, the son of a Lutheran minister.[1] He graduated as Doctor of Philosophy at Jena in 1847, after studying under Stickel and Gildemeister, and in that year came to England, to teach German at King's School, Canterbury. In 1851 he was appointed Oriental Lecturer at St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, which post he continued to hold until his death. In 1863, on the recommendation of Sir Henry Rawlinson, Rost was appointed Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society. When Fitzedward Hall's retirement from the Library was made known, Rost applied for the vacancy, and in the face of severe competition—among the rival candidates for the office were several promising orientalists, including the great and tragic E. H. Palmer of Cambridge—he secured the appointment, as from 1 July 1869. The fifth Sanskritist to hold the office, Rost at once set about the herculean labour of putting into order and making available to the public, through published catalogues, the vast unarranged accumulations of seventy years. The details of Rost's plans for cataloguing the various collections of manuscripts and printed books, and of their

[1] It is an ironic commentary on the decline of oriental learning in England which followed Macaulay's ukase, that within one generation of the days of Wilkins and Jones, it should have become necessary to appoint first an American, and then a German, to the charge of the Library. Similarly Blochmann and Sprenger in India, Rieu at the British Museum, Ethé at Aberystwyth, these among others came from abroad to keep alight the torch of oriental studies in the country where it was first kindled.

subsequent fulfilment down to the year 1901, are given in full in an official paper issued in that year, entitled *Précis of Correspondence, &c., regarding the Cataloguing of* (1) *Oriental Manuscripts, and* (2) *Printed Oriental Books in the India Office Library.*[1] It is not necessary here to quote at any length from this paper, since the information which it contains is incorporated in an appendix to this historical sketch, wherein are listed all the catalogues, published and unpublished, of the Library's resources which have hitherto been prepared.

It is now necessary to refer to an event of the greatest importance in the subsequent history of the Library, an event which in fact fundamentally affected the very nature and character of the Library: this event was the passing, in the year 1867, of the (Indian) Press and Registration of Books Act (Act XXV of 1867). Under the provisions of this Act (paragraphs 9 to 11), one copy of every printed or lithographed book issued in India was required to be forwarded to the Secretary of State for India in London; and the India Office Library became in consequence vested with the nature of a Copyright Library for Indian publications. The flood of material which followed proved, however, a very mixed blessing; and in 1877, at Rost's suggestion, a new procedure was sanctioned, whereby only a selection of such copyright literature was ordered to be transmitted, such a selection being made at the Librarian's discretion: for facilitating this process, quarterly catalogues were issued and continue to be issued by the various provincial governments, listing all publications which may appear in each respective province during the relevant three months. Act XXV of 1867 has since been amended in many particulars, but this provision has very wisely been allowed

[1] It is worthy of notice how many compatriots Rost was able to find to catalogue the various collections: Loth for the Arabic, Ethé for the Persian, Haas and Eggeling, followed by Windisch, for the Sanskrit, Fausböll for the Burmese, and Oldenburg for the Pali manuscripts.

to remain in force: with the result that, by virtue of the discriminate selections of a succession of learned librarians, the India Office Library now possesses a copy of every important publication, whether in English or in any oriental language, which has appeared during the last seventy years in India.

The value of this collection to the student of Indian affairs is inestimable. Every branch of administration, every aspect of daily and cultural life, is fully documented. The collections of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic books are precious instruments of research available to all students of oriental literature, history and religions. The tens of thousands of printed and lithographed works composed in every known language and dialect of modern India constitute a [illegible] plete as industry can make it, of t[illegible] of the vast sub-continent. It is impossible to overstate the importance, to India, of the existence in the capital of the Empire of a fully representative collection of the masterpieces of Indian literature, made accessible, through the liberal policy of the Secretary of State, to all who may desire to make themselves acquainted therewith. When the literatures of modern India attain the recognition which they richly merit, and are studied for their importance as shedding light on the lives and aspirations of one-fifth of the human race, the so-called "vernacular" side of the Library of the India Office will be recognized as a unique treasure-house of Indian literature and learning; and thither the oriental historian of the future will repair, to trace the undercurrents of thought and feeling which went to shape the history of India.

Rost retired from the Library in 1893, full of years and honours: on 7 February 1896 he died. Edinburgh had made him an honorary Doctor of Laws in 1877; foreign academies and learned societies had paid their tribute to his genius; in 1888 he was invested with the insignia of the C.I.E. "Rost's power of assimilating oriental

tongues has been rarely equalled; and it is perhaps no exaggeration to affirm that he stood second only to Sir William Jones as a universal linguist. There was scarcely a language spoken in the Eastern Hemisphere with which Rost was not, at least to some extent, familiar. Nor did he confine himself to the widely disseminated oriental tongues. He pursued his researches into unfamiliar, and in many cases almost unknown, dialects which are usually unheeded by philologists. At St. Augustine's College, in addition to his ordinary lectures in Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Arabic, and Urdu, he at times gave lessons in the dialects of Africa, China, and Polynesia. Rost was familiar with some twenty or thirty languages in all. With some of them his acquaintance, although invariably competent, was not profound. But his mastery of Sanskrit was complete, and the breadth of his oriental learning led oriental scholars throughout the world to consult him repeatedly on points of difficulty and doubt."[1] As author, and still more as editor, he made important contributions to oriental scholarship: but no greater achievement stands or could stand to his credit than the complete success with which, during 34 years of tireless service, he converted the Library of the India Office from being a repository of uncharted oceans of precious materials, into being a well-ordered, well-catalogued oriental library of universal renown. A plaster bust of Rost, executed by his son, Mr. A. E. L. Rost, and presented by him to the India Office, stands in the corridor outside the Librarian's room, while a framed plaque by the same artist, presented by Sir Richard Temple, hangs on the wall of Room 303.

In 1877, a special investigation was conducted by the Library Committee into the organization of the Library: the findings and recommendations of that body are contained in a Report dated 19 March 1877, which was subsequently printed. Before touching on this report, it

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. xlix, p. 291.

is necessary to summarize the history of the preceding twenty years.

The transfer to the Crown in 1858 necessitated new procedures and new regulations. In 1859, Wilson was asked to "state . . . the regulations or practice now acted upon in his Department with respect to the issue of warrants or authorities for the payment of money, as well as for the sanction of any charge or expense." In a minute dated 2 December 1859, Wilson adumbrated the procedure which he had followed during his term of office, and which he had presumably taken over from Wilkins, in the following terms:

> I am not aware of the existence of any rules. The practice of many years has been as follows.
>
> The only payments made on account of the Library are for the purchase of Books, the cost of binding them and petty charges no item of which is to exceed £5. These are paid by the Librarian or upon his authority.
>
> Petty charges on account of the Museum of Natural History are also paid by the Librarian on the warranty of the Curator.
>
> The Funds for these disbursements were chiefly provided for by a Warrant issued by the Finance and Home Committee in favour of the Librarian as an advance, upon his application.
>
> The Amount so advanced at one time has been usually £200, never oftener than once in a year, sometimes less frequently.[1]

The books published by the Company were now disposed of, and the arrangements with the Company's Booksellers were wound up. Thereafter, no definite sum appears to have been assigned to the maintenance of the Library until 1865, when, by a vote in Council, £100 a year was set aside for the purchase of books. This sum was doubled in 1867: but this by no means sufficed

[1] This was the procedure in Wilkins' time, as several entries, relating to warrants in his favour in varying amounts, may be seen in the volumes of the *Court Book*.

to cover the whole expenses of the Library, as charges for binding manuscripts and books were met separately, and averaged at this time about £234 *per annum*.

The Committee of 1877 put the financial arrangements of the administration of the Library on a sound basis, which subsequent amplifications have only served to strengthen. The Committee also considered the question of the scope of the Library in relation to future purchases, and laid down the following principles:[1]

With respect to the principle on which additions to the Library should be made, the Committee are of opinion that the main object is to obtain a complete collection of works relating to the East, and more especially to India, and the countries adjoining it, including the Russian Empire.

It also ought to comprise works of reference, and publications bearing on administration and government, which are needed for official use.

These principles have been subsequently re-defined on a number of occasions, most recently in the *Report* of the Committee of Investigation of 1935-36, as follows:[2]

In 1895 this definition [of the Committee of 1877] was thought to be too wide, and narrower limits to the scope of future accessions were accordingly prescribed. The Librarian was authorised to recommend for purchase—

(i) all works, unless quite worthless, which relate directly to India and to Indian affairs;

(ii) a selection of general works which bear indirectly on India; and

(iii) a selection of works which deal with other Asiatic countries when such works bear on the relations of these countries with India.

In the main this definition, which still governs the Librarian's recommendations, seems to us satisfactory. We consider it desirable, however, to define more precisely the limits to be

[1] *Report*, p. 1. [2] Pp. 21-22.

observed in the acquisition of modern Arabic and Persian works and of works relating to North Africa, the Near East and the Far East. For this purpose we suggest the following formulæ:—

(1) Purchases of modern Arabic and Persian books should be restricted to works on the history, religions and classical literature of the Arabs and Persia, and otherwise to such works as are of special Indian interest.

(2) Publications in European languages relating to North Africa, the Near East and the Far East may be regarded as being within the scope of the Library only in so far as they bear in any way upon the peoples of India and Indian affairs.

Various other recommendations of the Committee of 1877 provided for the abolition of the "promiscuous patronage of literary works,"[1] and in other ways set up regulations for the guidance of the Librarian.

When the India Office was ready for occupation, the Library and Museum were, as we have stated above, brought together once more, and for some five years continued in uneasy partnership at the top of the new building. But it soon became obvious that this accommodation would never suffice for the needs of the ever-swelling collection of museum exhibits, and plans were accordingly devised for the foundation of an Indian Museum, to occupy a site in King Charles Street immediately opposite the India Office. A very detailed and able exposition of this plan was drawn up by Dr. J. Forbes Watson, then Reporter on the Products of India; and his pamphlet, *On the means required for the efficient working of the India Museum and Library, with suggestions for the foundation, in connection with them, of an Indian Institute for enquiry, lecture, and teaching*, was printed as a departmental paper in 1874. In that year, the Secretary of State had been persuaded, in view of the hopeless congestion prevailing in the apartments of the Library and Museum, temporarily to

[1] *Report*, p. 4.

lease the Eastern Exhibition Galleries at South Kensington for housing the Museum. When the plan for the foundation of an Indian Museum was submitted, the Imperial Government declined to make the necessary contribution to the costs of erecting the building, and accordingly the Museum as it stood was dispersed, its contents were divided between the South Kensington Museum, the British Museum, the Bethnal Green Museum, the Royal School of Mines, and the Museum of Kew Gardens, and the staff were given notice of the termination of their services. It is permissible to regret that so great an opportunity was so lightly let slip: and now the site proposed for the Museum, in such suitable juxtaposition to the India Office itself, is occupied by the building of His Majesty's Office of Works. But the loss of the Museum was the great gain of the Library. The apartments on the third floor were entirely reconstructed: rooms for the staff, and a fine reading room for the general public, were provided, while ample space was allocated for expansion in the housing of books and manuscripts. These arrangements continued with little change, until very recently.

Dr. Rost's successor was another eminent Sanskritist, Professor Charles Henry Tawney. Born in 1837, the son of the Rev. Richard Tawney, he was educated at Rugby and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he had the great distinction of being bracketed Senior Classic in 1860. After holding a Fellowship at Trinity College, Tawney went out to India, in 1864, to a career of the highest utility in the Bengal Educational Service. For many years he was Professor and President of the Presidency College, Calcutta, and thrice he officiated as Director of Public Instruction in the Province of Bengal. For his services he was decorated with the C.I.E. He edited and translated a number of Sanskrit works, and also produced an edition of Shakespeare's *Richard III.* A few months after his appointment as Librarian,

Tawney initiated a plan for cataloguing all the collections of oriental printed books in the Library: this ambitious scheme, which is still in process of completion, owes much of its success to the able and energetic work of the late Professor J. F. Blumhardt, whose knowledge of Indian languages was most remarkable. Tawney retired from the Library in 1903, and died in 1922, at the great age of 85. During his ten years of office, the Library continued, under the impetus which Rost had given it, to expand, and to increase in efficiency, accessibility, and renown.

§ 5

To attempt to give a complete account of the provenance and history of each individual collection of the twenty thousand manuscripts now preserved in the Library of the India Office would be to expand this sketch far beyond its intended limits. In this chapter a few only of these collections will be described in any detail, but these may be regarded as representative, and as typical of the rest.

A broad line of separation divides the manuscript resources of the Library into European and Oriental collections. Of the European manuscripts, the great majority of which are, naturally, written in English, a sufficiently complete account is already available in the published catalogues of the various collections.[1] The two most important collections on the European side are those which the Library owes to Orme and Mackenzie.[2]

Reference has already been made to the Orme Collection. It was presented to the Library in 1801 by John Roberts, acting in fulfilment of Orme's declared wishes. The collection represents a substantial portion of the materials which Orme put together in preparation of his *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan.*[3] The value of these materials is very unequal; but the collection contains much that is extremely important. The military journals, for example, are quite unique, and apart from the information of historical and military interest, their contents also throw light on problems of geography, topography and eth-

[1] See below, Appendix.

[2] Included in the Mackenzie Collections was a great number of oriental manuscripts also, in a variety of languages.

[3] First published at London in 3 volumes, 1763-1778, this celebrated work passed through several subsequent editions.

nology. Moreover, the collection comprises a considerable quantity of copies of official and demi-official documents of which the originals have been destroyed: thus, much of the secret history of the war with Ḥaidar 'Alī is only revealed by the materials preserved by Orme.

The celebrity of the Mackenzie Collections, and their unrivalled value, require no emphasis here: Peter Gordon's letter of 1835 shews in what justly high esteem they were already held, a century ago. A catalogue, or rather hand-list, of them was printed in Calcutta as early as 1828, the compilation of H. H. Wilson, who was at that time Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal: in this two-volume publication, an authentic account is given, based on a letter written by Colonel Mackenzie to Sir Alexander Johnston, of the circumstances which attended the making of the collections. Mackenzie, who in 1815, after most valuable work in various provinces of India and in the East Indies, had been appointed Surveyor-General of All India, died in 1821: the story of how his two subsidiary collections then passed into the possession, first of the Government of Fort William, and afterwards of the Company's Library, is told in F. W. Thomas' preface to C. O. Blagden's catalogue of "the 1822 Collection & the Private Collection" (London, 1916), while the history of how the Main Collection, listed by Wilson in 1822, passed likewise to Leadenhall Street is prefixed to the catalogue of those manuscripts shortly to be published. The "Main Collection" comprised, among other materials, a great number of manuscripts in Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Tamil, Telugu, and various other modern Indian languages: all these latter, with the exception of those written in the classical tongues, were returned to India in 1828, and are now preserved in Madras.

Notes descriptive of the means of acquisition and the contents of the many 'minor' collections of European manuscripts will be found in the body of the catalogue

of G. R. Kaye and E. H. Johnston. Reference will here be made to a few only.

First in importance are the Hodgson Papers, which were presented to the Library in 1864: a summary account of their contents is given in the following letter, written by Hodgson himself to Sir Charles Wood, who was at that time Secretary of State for India:[1]

THE RANGERS,
DURSLEY,
GLOSTERSHIRE.
August 2d 1864.

SIR,

Having recently submitted to the summary inspection of Mr Hall librarian of the India Office a great mass of MSS collected by me during a long course of years in Nepal when Resident at the Court of Kathmandu with a view to illustrate the natural & civil history, the literature, languages, religion, institutions, & resources of that little-known Country, and Mr Hall having concurred with me in opinion that these materials, how crude soever their present state, are eminently calculated to subserve the ends for which they were gradually accumulated, and also, that by being deposited in the India Office Library they are most likely to be turned to use, I hereby beg to tender them to your acceptance for the said library, and to acquaint you that lists in English & Hindi of the contents of these MSS are in the hands of the Librarian.

I may, however, summarily here state that these MSS contain, inter alia, 1st Twenty three Vansāvalis or native Chronicles, partially translated (like most of the other papers) and chronologized by the help of coins & inscriptions. 2d a great mass of original documents relative to the land revenue & to the Customs duties. 3d Ditto relative to the army, its amount, discipline, distribution, system of payment, tribes constituting the soldiery, &c., &c. 4th ditto relative to the general Ethnography, its amount & its constituents lingually & physically viewed. 5th ditto relative to the law & legal administration. 6th ditto relative to the customs & manners of the population. 7th Registers of the barometer &

[1] *Financial Papers*, 1864 (August).

thermometer, & tables of prices. 8th Topography, being 22 itineraries, sketch map, &c. 9th Fifty-eight separate bundles of papers relative to the prevalent religion or Buddhism. 10th Thirty six Sanscrit Sastras and seventeen Lepcha and fourteen Limbu books.

I have the honor
to be Sir,
Your most obt Servant
(Sd) BRIAN HOUGHTON HODGSON.

The Hodgson donations include also thirty Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts; and a complete copy of both the Sacred Codes of Tibet, obtained from the Grand Lama, and presented in 1835.[1] A very interesting account of Hodgson—who died at the great age of 95—and of the circumstances under which he put together his fine collections, is contained in Sir W. Hunter's *Life of Hodgson* (London, 1896). Not only this Library, but also the libraries of the Royal Asiatic Society, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the Institut de France, and the Société Asiatique de Paris were enriched by his munificent donations.

A most interesting collection of papers was acquired in 1927, when the Francis Manuscripts were purchased. This collection consisted of 51 bound volumes and 13 bundles of loose papers, and the most important section is the extensive range of correspondence which passed between Sir Philip Francis and various of his eminent contemporaries. Sir Philip Francis, as is well known, was a prominent figure in the political life of England at the time of the notorious Junius controversy,

[1] See *India Political Consultations*, Range 193, vol. 82 (Fort William, 24 August 1835, nos. 48-9)—Hodgson mentions "three hundred and twenty large printed volumes," but 12 of these have long been missing; *Court Book*, vol. 146, p. 535 (22 March 1836); *India and Bengal Despatches*, vol. 9 (27 July 1836), pp. 405-9. Hunter (*Life of Hodgson*, p. 270) is mistaken in saying that the presentation took place in 1838: it was in the latter year that Hodgson's name was inscribed as donor (*Court Book*, vol. 151, p. 551).

and there is strong evidence, earnestly canvassed by his descendants, that he was actually identical with the pamphleteer whose sensational letters to the *Public Advertizer* created such a stir for a generation afterwards. Francis later went out to India, and much valuable information about the undercurrents of British policy in that country towards the end of the eighteenth century may be gleaned from the papers relating to this period of his life. The collection contains, among other most interesting and valuable material, no fewer than twenty-eight holograph letters of Edmund Burke.

Another important collection, of purely Indian interest, is that of Francis Buchanan, later styling himself Francis Hamilton, and frequently known as Francis Buchanan-Hamilton. Much of Buchanan's activities were connected with surveying work and special missions, notably a mission to Nepal in 1802-3, accounts of which are given in his manuscripts. The journals of William Moorcroft cover a different field, and relate to his travels from Peshawar to Bukhara in quest of stallions for the Company's Bengal stud: he died in 1825, on the return journey. The remarkable career of Charles Masson, the son of a London tradesman, and his adventures in Afghanistan and the neighbouring territories, are illustrated by the voluminous collection of his papers now in the possession of this Library. Mention must also be made of the Raffles Collection, consisting mainly of correspondence of Sir Stamford Raffles, of Java fame; the C. P. Brown manuscripts, relating to his pioneer studies of the Telugu language; and the Wilson Manuscripts, the raw material of our second Librarian's published work, containing fair copies of originals now in the Bodleian Library, but incidentally including Charles Wilkins' translations of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Daśakumāracarita*, and the second half of H. T. Colebrooke's important and unpublished list of Sanskrit verbal roots. These are a few of the more important

collections of European manuscripts which help to make this Library a unique repository of primary documents of Anglo-Indian history.

The Arabic and Persian collections are of manifold and diverse origins, and here it is only possible to refer to the most important items. First in point of time, and of great critical value besides, is that portion of Tippoo Sultan's library which eventually came to Leadenhall Street in 1806 and 1838, the former lot brought by Lord Wellesley, while the latter came from the dispersed library of the College of Fort William after that institution had been closed. We have already adverted in some detail to the circumstances leading up to the acquisition of these manuscripts,[1] but it will be of interest here to add some details which will serve further to illustrate this chapter in the Library's history. Of particular importance is the letter written by Major-general W. Popham to Lord Wellesley in 1800 announcing the Army's gift of the manuscripts, because it shews that the Asiatic Society of Bengal was from the very beginning intended to share in the presentation along with the Company itself, a desire which was subsequently fully honoured.[2]

My Lord,

[illegible] 'ie honor to lay before your L[illegible] Books, selected from Tippoo Sultaun's Library, for the Honorable the Court of Directors and the Asiatic Society, by desire of the Officers of the Army, that achieved the conquest of Seringapatam.

Your Lordship, I flatter myself will find both selections highly respectable in regard to the Volumes themselves, as well, as from the happy and glorious events, which enabled

[1] See above, pp. 24-5, 33.

[2] *Bengal Public Consultations*, Range 5, vol. 14, no. 47; W. Ivanow, *A Concise Catalogue . . .*, pp. x-xi. The Court was in error in writing (*Bengal Despatches*, vol. 43, p. 32), "We now call your attention to the Library of the late Tippoo Sultaun *which the Captors destined for this House*, and which we have always intended should be preserved in the Company's Library."

the Army to present them, as a mark of respect and esteem to *their superiors* and their Friends.

Exclusive of the accompanying lists, there are many more Volumes, that it was the intention of the Army to have disposed of by sale; but it has been suggested by Colonel Close[1] that as the study of the Persian Language on the Coast required every stimulus, some of the Volumes might be lodged with advantage in the Persian Translator's Office at Fort St. George, for the benefit of students. In this, I most heartily concurred; and that the same steps should be taken respecting Bombay. This I hope may meet your Lordship's approbation.

Permit me now, my Lord, to request your Lordship's instructions, particularly, as to how the selection for the Honorable the Court of Directors is to be transmitted to Europe, or otherwise disposed of.

I have the honor to be, &c,

(Sd) William Popham.

Fort William,
26th August 1800.

The Governor-General, on his own authority, instructed in reply the following course of action to be followed:[2]

From a conviction that it will be more conducive to the interests of the Company as they are connected with the advancement of the knowledge of Asiatic Literature, both in England and among their servants in India, that the collection of books selected for the Honorable Court of Directors, instead of being sent to England, should be deposited in the Library of the College founded at Fort William, the Governor General has recommended to the Honorable Court, in a separate letter addressed to their Chairman, to permit the Books to be reserved for the use of the College, and it is his Lordship's intention to retain them at Fort William, until he

[1] Sir Barry Close, some time Resident at the Court of the Nizam of Hyderabad, died in 1813, and bequeathed to the Company's Library a considerable number of manuscripts, which he had collected in India.

[2] *Bengal Public Consultations*, Range 5, vol. 14, no. 48. See further [C. Buchanan], *The College of Fort William* (London, 1805), p. 40 (=*Home Misc. Series*, vol. 487, pp. 34-5).

shall be apprized of the Honorable Court's pleasure on the subject. . . As the Junior servants of the Company belonging to the Establishments of Fort St George and Bombay, have been ordered to repair to Fort William for the purpose of being attached to the College, it is desirable that the remainder of the Library of the late Tippoo Sultan proposed to be deposited at Fort St George and Bombay should also be lodged in the College, where the Servants of those Presidencies for whose use the books are chiefly intended, will have an opportunity of availing themselves of the benefit of them.

An exchange of views between Leadenhall Street and Fort William followed, the result of which was the transmission of that portion of the library which was received in 1806. Of those copies of the *Qur'ān* and the *S͟hāhnāmah* for which Tippoo's library was famous, details are given in Loth's (nos. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15) and Ethé's (nos. 861, 867, 868, 872) catalogues.

The methods employed by Tippoo Sultan himself, and his father, in the formation of the collection are illustrated by C. Stewart's remarks in his *Descriptive Catalogue*, pp. iv-v: "The Library consisted of nearly 2,000 volumes, of Arabic, Persian, and Hindy (or Hindūstāny) Manuscripts, in all the various branches of Mohammedan literature. Many of these were beautifully written, and highly ornamented; but a great portion were in bad condition; and several having lost both the first and last pages, it was extremely difficult to discover the Author, or the period in which they were composed. Very few of these books had been purchased either by Tippoo or his father. They were part of the plunder brought from Sanoor, Cuddapāh, and the Carnatic. Some of them had formerly belonged to the Mohammedan Kings of Bijapore and Golcondah; but the greater number had been the property of the Nabob Nesīr Addowleh Abd al Vāhib K͟hān, brother of Mohammed Aly of the Carnatic, and were taken by Hyder in the

fort of Chitore, during the year 1780." It is at any rate a matter for satisfaction that the manuscripts are now safe, and not likely ever again to be the object of theft or plunder: that, together with so many other collections, similarly saved from dispersion and inevitable loss, they are now at the disposal of the whole world of learning.

The history of the Bijapur Collection, consisting mainly of Arabic works, is described briefly in the preface to Loth's catalogue, and at great length in *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government*, No. xl (New Series), pp. 213-242. These books, the remnant of the Library of the 'Ādil-s̲h̲āhs, had remained for many years untended in the shrine of Asar Mahall at Bijapur, before being "discovered" by M. C. d'Ochoa, a French scholar: they are for the most part in a lamentable condition, having suffered terribly from the attentions of worms and white ants, and it is probable that, but for their timely removal in 1851, and subsequent careful preservation in London, they might by now have entirely perished. The first hand-list of the collection as it was at Bijapur was made at the instance of H. B. E. (afterwards Sir Bartle) Frere, Commissioner in Satara, as described in his letter to the Government of Bombay of 17 December 1849:

Throughout Beejapoor and its neighbourhood I could not find, among the many thousand Mahomedan inhabitants, a single Arabic scholar competent to give any trustworthy account of the contents of the volumes. After my return to Satara, however, I was introduced to Humeed-ood-deen Hukeem, a Mahomedan gentleman of great respectability, and of reputed skill as a physician, on account of which, and of his general learning, he had been brought from Hyderabad, and received an allowance as a physician, on the Raja's household establishment. He was said to be a very accomplished Arabic scholar, and though a cripple from his birth, unable to rise without assistance, and sorely afflicted with St Vitus' dance, he cheerfully undertook a journey in the hot

weather to see what could be done, and remained for many months at Beejapoor.

It is pleasing to recall that the heroic labours of this gentleman, but for which the collection might never have been saved, were suitably rewarded by Government, with a donation of money, some books, and a shawl. The manuscripts themselves are now fully described in the catalogues of Loth and Ethé.

It is hardly to be doubted that the so-called Delhi Collection would have also perished, had not circumstances conspired to save these books likewise. This collection of Arabic, Persian and Urdu manuscripts represents all that was left, in 1858, of the once magnificent library of the Moghul Emperors. In Mandelslo's *Travels*, the following description is given of the contents of that library, as it existed in the middle of the seventeenth century:[1]

> Foure and twenty Thousand Manuscripts, so richly bound, that they were valued at six Millions, four hundred sixty three Thousand seven hundred thirty one *Ropias*; that is, three Millions, two hundred thirty one Thousand, eight hundred sixty five Crowns and a half.

Of this incredible collection, less than one quarter, numerically seen, remained when the last of the Delhi Emperors lost his throne; and of this quarter, only about one fifth can have belonged to the old library which Mandelslo saw, since the rest are of more recent date; while the rich bindings, on which the traveller based, apparently, his valuation, have utterly vanished. Already as early at least as 1810, manuscripts from this library which had by some means or other come into the possession of private collectors were being sold by public auction in London:[2] and it is probably no exaggeration

[1] *Travels* (English translation, London, 1662), p. 48.

[2] See *A Catalogue of the Library of the late William Platel, Esq.* (London, 1810), an advertisement for a sale by Leigh and Sotheby, which took place on 13 December 1810 and eight following days.

to say, that there is hardly a single major library of oriental manuscripts in East or West today, public or private, which does not contain at least some items that were formerly the pride of the Moghuls. Gifts to princes and statesmen explain in part this remarkable dispersion; while doubtless the later Emperors were only too willing, when occasion served, to replenish their empty treasuries by disposing of their manuscript assets: indeed, in the whole Delhi Collection, as it now stands, there is not a single item of sufficient merit in calligraphy or illumination to excite the interest of the connoisseur, though a substratum of bibliographically important volumes, including for example a reputed autograph of the Persian poet Sulṭān Walad, son of the great Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī,[1] and a fine old unique copy, imperfect at beginning and end, of the *Zoology* of Marwazī,[2] bears tantalizing witness to the pristine splendour of the Royal Library of Delhi. The zeal of Major W. Nassau Lees, and the prompt intervention of Government, saved the remnant from following the major portion into oblivion. It is hardly to be doubted that the library of the Burmese kings would likewise have been scattered to the ends of the earth, had not steps been taken in 1886 to save it for perpetuity in the Library of the India Office.[3]

Reference has already been made to the purchase of the Johnson, Hastings and Leyden manuscripts.[4] Richard Johnson served the Company for twenty-nine years, going out to Calcutta in 1770 as a writer. For a time he

[1] Delhi Persian 1263: this manuscript, which has been severely damaged by white ants, bears the autograph of Dārā Shukōh, the son of the Emperor Shāh Jahān. This Library also possesses the so-called "Dārā Shukōh Album," a collection of paintings given by the Prince to his wife Nādira Bēgam in 1051/1641.

[2] Delhi Arabic 1849: see *J.R.A.S.*, 1937, pp. 481-3.

[3] The "Mandalay Collection," catalogued by V. Fausböll: even so, only about one-third of the whole library was saved, see Fausböll's *Catalogue* (London, 1897), p. 1.

[4] Above, p. 37.

was Resident at the Nizam's Court, and later had a deliberative voice on the Board of Revenue. Broken health obliged him to return to England, and his attempts at retrieving his fortunes having failed disastrously,[1] he was at last constrained in 1807 to offer to dispose of the remarkable collection of oriental manuscripts and drawings which he had put together, at great expense, during his residence in India.

Wilkins was asked by the Court to report on the contents of the collection, and his remarks, which are extremely interesting, are still extant.[2] "There is a great number of books," he writes, "of the first rank as to the beauty of the writing, and splendour of the decorations; and not a few exquisitely fine. . . . In order to form an idea of the value of this collection, it had been my intention to have gone over the whole, and have fixed a price on each book individually, according to its subject, condition and other circumstances; but I presently found that it would have been a very tedious operation and consume more time than the lamentable state of Mr. Johnson's health would, without great danger, allow him to stay in Town, he being ordered to try the effect of the Bath Pump with all possible expedition. I therefore proceeded in a more cursory way. . . . The result upon 600 volumes of which those lists consisted, turned out to be the general average of upwards of two Guineas and a half a volume, and which may be fairly considered as the average of the rest of the collection. I have not counted the exact number of the books; but Mr. Johnson rates them at between ten and eleven hundred, exclusive of paintings which do not enter into this calculation. . . . I did not venture to fix in my mind any price upon the Pictures, because their value can only be estimated by taste fancy and fashion. They are certainly

[1] See the Memorial addressed by his widow to the Court of Directors in 1807, *Miscellaneous Letters Received*, vol. 116 (1807, 2), no. 141.

[2] *Miscellaneous Letters Received*, vol. 115 (1807, 1), no. 75.

a very fine collection, and the price fixed upon them far less than the original cost."

The albums of paintings—the "Johnson Albums"—67 in number, form an extremely interesting and varied collection, and enjoy a deserved celebrity. There are several reputed portraits of Moghul Emperors and Princes, while Hindu, Muslim and Christian subjects alike are well represented. It has been calculated that, including the miniatures contained in manuscripts, the number of drawings thus acquired from Richard Johnson exceeds 1,300. As for the manuscripts themselves, it will be necessary to mention only a few items, to prove that Wilkins' estimate of them is by no means exaggerated. To Johnson belonged the very remarkable collection of Persian *dīwāns* (no. 132) which, written in the year 714/1315, and containing very curious miniature paintings, is of unique importance for the critical study of the poems of Nāṣir i Khusrau, Adīb Ṣābir, Mu'izzī, Qamar, Athīr and Ṭabasī. He also possessed the celebrated most ancient copy of the works of Amīr Khusrau (Ethé 1186), the very rare *Khamsah* of Jamālī (Ethé 1284), and numerous other manuscripts of great artistic or bibliographical interest.

The Hastings Collection comprises some very remarkable items, including a gorgeous *Shāh-nāmah* written in 971/1564 (Ethé 863), the fine old, but unfortunately fragmentary, poetical collection (no. 1444) containing certain of the works of Sanā'ī (Ethé 916), Nasafī (Ethé 929) and Niẓāmī (Ethé 989), and a number of mathematical books (Loth 743, 745, 746, 753, 759; Ethé 2235, 2237) which Warren Hastings himself supposed, but erroneously, to be of outstanding merit.[1]

The Leyden Collection (Bibliotheca Leydeniana), bought, as recorded above,[2] from his father in 1824 for

[1] See his letter to Wilkins, quoted in Peter Gordon's tract (above, p. 52).
[2] Above, p. 38.

£500, is summarily described in the following note, apparently written in 1817, when the collection was first deposited in the Company's warehouses:[1]

> There are in all 16 large chests:—14 at the Private Trade Warehouse and 2 at the Baggage Warehouse.
>
> Upon a cursory view and examination of these chests they have been found to contain not less than 2,500 articles: vizt. 2037 MSS inscribed with a style on the leaves of the Palmira tree (commonly called Cajans) in the various languages of the Country, 81 MSS on Paper of a similar description, 152 MSS in the Persian and Arabic characters, 148 Chinese printed books, 30 printed books chiefly from the press at Serampoor, 22 unbound quires and loose papers containing skeleton vocabularies in several languages, and about 30 miscellaneous articles.

John Leyden, born in 1775 at Denholm in Roxburghshire, at an early age shewed an astonishing aptitude for languages, and in 1801 was introduced by Richard Heber to Scott, whom he helped materially with the earlier volumes of the *Border Minstrelsy* (1802).[2] Being qualified as a doctor, he secured an appointment as assistant-surgeon on the Madras establishment of the East India Company in 1803. He travelled widely in Southern India and Malaya, and then returned to settle at Calcutta in 1806, where he held various appointments. Meanwhile, his fertile mind found recreation in the study of a bewildering variety of oriental languages, and according to the *Reports and Proceedings of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (1811-12) he translated one or more of the Gospels into "Pashtu, Maldivian, Balloch, Macassar, and Bugis." Of his various philological enterprises only one, a Prakrit Grammar, ever reached an advanced stage. Leyden was also a gifted poet, and his *Poetical Remains*, edited with a Memoir in 1819 by the

[1] *Correspondence Memoranda*, vol. 42 (1814-18).

[2] *D.N.B.*, vol. xxxiii, p. 215.

Rev. James Morton, include graceful versions made from an astonishing number of languages. Who can doubt that Leyden, had he been spared, would have become one of the greatest, if not actually the greatest, of that celebrated circle of orientalists whose accomplishments lent abiding lustre to the activities of the British in India a century ago? But in 1811 he accompanied Lord Minto to Java as Malay interpreter: his "literary zeal took him into an unventilated native library; fever supervened, and he died at Cornelis, after three days' illness, 28 Aug., 1811,"[1] a few days before his thirty-sixth birthday.

In 1876, the Royal Society presented to this Library the Sir William Jones and Ashburner Collections of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit manuscripts: those in Arabic and Persian were catalogued by the late Professor E. G. Browne and Dr. (now Sir) E. Denison Ross, while the Sanskrit manuscripts were described by C. H. Tawney and F. W. Thomas, then Librarian and Assistant Librarian respectively.

The backbone of the Library's Sanskrit resources is the Colebrooke Collection, to which reference has already been made.[2] It was on 15 April 1819 that H. T. Colebrooke, who had had a distinguished career lasting thirty-two years in the service of the East India Company—he went out to Bengal as a writer in 1782—and had been for many years a close personal friend of Charles Wilkins, wrote to the Court of Directors "offering for the Court's acceptance his Collection of Oriental Manuscripts, upon the sole Condition, that he may have free access to it, with leave to have any Numbers of Books from it for his own use, to be sent to him from time to time on his requisition to the Librarian to that effect and to be returned by him at his convenience."[3] This generous

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[2] Above, p. 42.

[3] *Court Book*, vol. 127, p. 32. The *Day Book* bears witness to the fact that the "sole Condition" which Colebrooke laid down was afterwards fulfilled faithfully.

offer was accepted with alacrity, and in notifying Colebrooke of the appreciation with which his gift was received, the Secretary informed him that "the Court propose to sett apart a portion of their Library for the reception of these Valuable Manuscripts and to distinguish it by the name of the Colebrooke Collection."[1] As a further mark of appreciation and esteem, the following letter was also written:[2]

H. T. Colebrook Esq[R]
Sir,

I have had the honor to convey to you by command of the Court of Directors of the East India Company their thanks for the valuable Collection of Oriental Manuscripts which you obligingly presented for their acceptance & which they have ordered to be placed in the Library at this House under the denomination of the "Colebrooke Collection".

I have now the honor to express to you the wish of the Court to have your Bust for the purpose of being placed in the Company's Library as an appropriate accompaniment to that Collection.

Should you be pleased to gratify the Court by meeting their wish on the present occasion they will on being favored with your decision give the necessary instructions to Mr Chantrey to attend you for the above mentioned purpose.

I have the honor to be
Sir,
(Sd) J. Dart
Secr'y.

East India House,
13*th May* 1819.

Chantrey's marble bust of Colebrooke, made in 1820 at a fee of 120 guineas, now stands in the Corridor leading to the Reading Room of the Library.[3]

Jones, Wilkins, Leyden, Colebrooke—these were the days of giants of intellect, and the same zeal which in-

[1] *Miscellanies*, vol. 58, p. 240, dated 24 April 1819.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 276.
[3] W. Foster, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Paintings, Statues, etc., in the India Office* (5th edition), p. 84, no. 435.



HENRY THOMAS COLEBROOKE (1765-1837).
Bust by Chantrey.

spired a Goethe to cover the whole field of human knowledge, and to achieve fame in literature and science alike, fired many a lesser-known contemporary. As though it were not enough for one man to rise to the highest post to which a civilian might in those days aspire in India—a seat on the Council of the Governor-General—and, in the little leisure left after the performance of official duties, to acquire a masterly knowledge of Sanskrit language, literature and law, Colebrooke also took within his ambit the study of botany, zoology, entomology, meteorology, and mathematics, and to the breadth and depth of his various accomplishments eloquent testimony is borne by the very long bibliography appended to the notice of his life in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. xi, p. 286. At his brother's inducement, he also became a keen rider and shot, and in his later years attached more credit to his sporting accomplishments—how typical of an Englishman!—than to those contributions to science which had won for him an international reputation. His closing days, however, were clouded by domestic and financial troubles; the death of two promising sons broke his health and spirit; cataract afflicted him with total blindness; and on 10 March 1837, at the age of 72, this great scholar, great gentleman and great benefactor of the Library died, within a year of the death of his friend Wilkins. The manuscripts which he presented to the Company, numbering more than 2,000 volumes, cover all the branches of Sanskrit literature and science, forming a library not unworthy of a prince.

Many Sanskrit manuscripts were included in the Gaekwar of Baroda's gift,[1] as well as in the Taylor Bequest.[2] Other important collections of Sanskrit works

[1] See above, p. 41.

[2] Received on 15 March 1827: see above, p. 42. In the *Day Book* the collection is described as consisting of "24 Bundles containing the Sanskrit and Mahratta MSS. bequeathed to this Institution by the late I. Taylor M.D. of Bombay."

include those of A. C. Burnell, acquired partly by gift in 1870, and partly by purchase in 1882, and of J. G. Bühler, presented in 1888; the donation of Rajah Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore, received in 1902;[1] and the Aufrecht Collection, bought in 1904.

Arthur Coke Burnell, eldest son of Arthur Burnell of the Company's marine service, and grand-nephew of Sir W. Coke, Chief Justice of Ceylon, went out to India in 1860, at the age of 20. Gifted to a remarkable degree in the acquisition of languages, his taste for which was stimulated by early contacts with George Borrow, he rapidly assimilated a variety of oriental tongues, but became especially proficient in Sanskrit. During his eight years' residence in Southern India, he made a very choice and valuable collection of 350 Sanskrit Vedic manuscripts, published a hand-list of them at London in 1869, and the following year presented them to this Library. Of his gift Rost wrote, "Mr. Burnell's collection of Sanskrit MSS. is probably the most important that has reached England since the days of Professor Wilson. Besides consisting exclusively of picked MSS., the collection represents the Sanskrit literature as current in the south of India, and this feature constitutes its special value. I know that Mr. Burnell spent something like £3,000 upon the acquisition of these MSS."[2] On his return to India, Burnell served as judge successively at Mangalore and Tanjore, and in 1880 the Madras government published his *Classified Index to the Sanskrit MSS. in the Palace at Tanjore*. Other very important contributions to oriental scholarship stand to his credit, certain of which were published posthumously; for in 1882 he died, at the early age of 42, his naturally weak constitution having been broken by the exhausting climate of Madras. Since 1870 he had collected a further

[1] Described in T. Aufrecht's article, *Saṃskṛt-Handschriften*, in *Z.D.M.G.*, 1904, pp. 525-538.
[2] Letter of 4 July 1870, in *Financial Papers*, 1870.

350 Sanskrit and Prakrit manuscripts, and these were purchased from his heirs.[1]

Johann Georg Bühler was born in 1837, the son of a Hanover pastor, and after studying Sanskrit at Paris, London and Oxford, he went out to Bombay in 1863 as Professor of Oriental Languages at the Elphinstone College, subsequently holding various high official posts in the educational service. He is reputed to have collected over 5,000 Sanskrit manuscripts for the Indian Government; he also made a substantial private collection, which he disposed of to various public institutions in Europe.[2] To this Library he made a present of 321 manuscripts when Professor of Indian Philology and Archæology at the University of Vienna: in his letter to Rost, announcing his offer to present, he writes, "Should the Collection not appear altogether worthless to you, I would beg you to place before the R^t^ Hon^ble^ H.M. Secretary of State for India my humble wish to present it to the India Office library as a free gift, on the following conditions:

(*a*) that during my life-time those MSS. of the Collection, which I may require for the continuance of my studies, may be lent to me for such periods and in such numbers as my convenience may require, against the usual receipts for books issued;

(*b*) that after my death the Collection may remain accessible to all Sanskrit students and that its contents may be lent both to British subjects and Foreigners, residing out of England, under the regulations in force at the time."[3] Rost welcomed the presentation with enthusiasm, and the conditions imposed by the donor were readily complied with. Bühler's life of great distinction and usefulness was cut short in 1898, when he was drowned in Lake Constance.

[1] *Minutes of the Council of India*, vol. 50, p. 384.
[2] For details, see Bühler's own account in *Z.D.M.G.*, 1888, pp. 530-6.
[3] R. & L. 234/1888.

The Aufrecht Collection represents the painstaking compilation, over a great number of years, of a very distinguished scholar. F. W. Thomas writes of it, in his detailed hand-list,[1] "The collection consists . . . partly of Sanskrit MSS., in most cases copied by Professor Aufrecht himself from originals in Europe or India, but including a few copies made, or procured from India, by friends . . . or otherwise obtained, and a few originals acquired by gift or purchase; partly of glossaries or word-indices; partly of *pratīka*-indices. . . . In several cases we have the full apparatus of MS., glossary, and *pratīka*-index to the same work. Many of the MSS. are equipped with collations, and miscellaneous notes are appended to a large proportion of them. . . . The most striking features of the collection are its mass taken absolutely and its comprehensiveness in relation to the main corpus of the Vedic and the Brahmanical Sanskrit literature." When Aufrecht parted with these manuscripts, at the age of 84, "he felt like a man who has lost wife and children":[2] he died three years later.

A very remarkable and quite priceless collection of documents, the so-called Stein Collection, is now preserved in part at the British Museum, and in part in the Library of the India Office. The acquisition by Colonel Bower in 1891 of the famous birch-bark medical manuscript in Sanskrit from Kuchā, known as the Bower Manuscript, was the first indication of the existence, in the sands of Eastern Turkestan, of literary treasure-trove. Subsequently other fragments came to light, and Dr. Hoernle induced the Government of India to instruct its agents to collect: a report of the collections thus formed, and sent to Calcutta during the years 1895-97, was published by Hoernle in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1899, 1902), and he devoted the rest of his life to the elucidation of Sanskrit documents from Eastern Turkestan. In 1898, Sir Aurel Stein formulated

[1] *J.R.A.S.*, 1908, p. 1029. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 1031.

a scheme for systematic exploration; and the outcome of this was his three expeditions of 1900-1, 1906-8 and 1913-16, described in his three monumental publications, *Ancient Khotan* (1907), *Serindia* (1921) and *Innermost Asia* (1928).

Of the documents found in these three expeditions, this Library is the repository of (i) the Tibetan, on wood and paper, (ii) the Khotanese and Kuchean, on paper, (iii) four-fifths of the Sanskrit and allied documents.[1] Of the first (Tibetan) group, the documents on wood were arranged and listed, largely by the devoted labour of Mr. G. H. Baker, under the supervision of Professor F. W. Thomas, in 56 "box-volumes"; while 80 bound volumes contain the paper documents. The second and third groups are preserved unbound.

Apart from the Tibetan documents discovered in Sir Aurel Stein's expeditions, the Library possesses a collection of Tibetan xylographs. This includes one set of the canon called Bstan-hgyur (Tanjur) in a hundred volumes, presented by Hodgson in 1835, as already related,[2] and two sets of the other canon, the Bkah-hgyur (Kanjur); of the latter, one was included in Hodgson's donation, while the other was brought back by Colonel L. A. Waddell, C.B., C.I.E., from the Tibet Mission to Lhasa 1903-4. A Tibetan collection made by Sir Denison Ross and acquired by the Library in 1907 comprises manuscripts as well as xylographs.

Besides documents on paper, palm-leaves, birch-bark, skins, wood, ivory and the baser metals, the Library possesses two historically interesting treaties inscribed on the precious metals—a roll of gold weighing about 14 ounces inscribed in the Malayalam language with an agreement made in 1691 between the Zamorin of Calicut

[1] The British Museum has (i) Chinese, Turki, Uigur and Sogdian, (ii) one-fifth of the Sanskrit, etc., documents, including all written in the Kharoṣṭhi script.

[2] See above, p. 78.

and the Dutch East India Company; and a roll of silver weighing about 16 ounces inscribed with a similar agreement made in 1679.

These are the most important, but by no means all, of the collections of eastern and western manuscripts preserved in the Library of the India Office. Even from so brief and non-technical a description of their contents, an estimate can be formed of their range, their variety and their great value. There is, indeed, no limit to the many-sided complexity of the human mind: and in this Library abundant material exists to excite the interest and exercise the ingenuity of scholars for many generations to come.

§ 6

Tawney retired in 1903. Meanwhile, in 1898 Dr. (now Emeritus-Professor) F. W. Thomas, like Tawney a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, had been appointed Assistant Librarian, in succession to Mr. Edward J. Wade. After William Miller's retirement in 1872, this office had been successively filled by Mr. R. C. Childers (1873-76) and Mr. E. Waterfield (1876-82). Wade's work was mainly the cataloguing of European printed books, and the first supplement of Volume I of the Library's Catalogue is the product of his industry.

Dr. Thomas succeeded Professor Tawney, and the next Assistant Librarian was Dr. (afterwards Sir) Thomas Arnold, the distinguished authority on Islam and Muslim Art. Arnold, who remained only six years in the Library, and whose subsequent distinguished career, cut short by his untimely death in 1930, is another story, was the first scholar specially appointed to take charge of the Arabic and Persian manuscripts and books. It had by now become quite impossible, by reason of the great and rapidly increasing complication of oriental studies, for one man to be sufficiently informed in all the three classical languages and literatures of India, as Wilkins had been, to administer the whole resources of this great library with uniform efficiency: and the new policy, which Arnold's appointment initiated, has now become permanent, securing that the succession of Sanskritist and Islamist remains unbroken. Subsequent augmentations to the staff include a technical adviser to take charge of the European books, and an oriental clerk to supervise the accessioning of books in modern Indian languages; while a very recent addition is the

welcome inclusion of a third orientalist whose scope is intended primarily to take in the Dravidian languages of southern India.

The preceding chapters have outlined in historical form the growth of this Library: it has been shewn how it developed, from being the private repository representing certain of the material assets of a great Company, into being the greatest specialist oriental library in the world. The following table of statistics, compiled from available records, illustrates how remarkable this growth has been.[1]

			Printed Vols.	*Manuscripts*
1877	...	...	30,000	10,000
1902	...	...	54,500	18,000
1935	...	...	230,000	20,000

A recent count of the number of printed books and pamphlets, classified according to languages, has given the following approximate result:

1. Classical oriental languages:		
Arabic and Persian	10,000	
Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit	22,000	
Tibetan	100	
Chinese	1,800	
Zend and Pahlavi	200	
	———	34,100
2. European languages		60,000
3. Modern Indian languages:		
Assamese	700	
Bengali	24,000	
Brahui	3	
Gujarati	9,500	
Hindi	19,400	
Kanarese	3,160	

[1] *Report of the Library Committee* of 1877; Librarian's note *On the Present Condition of the Library*, January 1902; *Report of the Committee of Investigation*, 1935-36; *India Office List*, 1936.

Malayalam	1,350	
Maithili	29	
Marathi	9,200	
Nepalese	370	
Oriya	3,950	
Panjabi	4,925	
Pashto	315	
Santali	125	
Savara	12	
Sindhi	2,500	
Tamil	15,250	
Telugu	9,500	
Urdu	19,000	
Miscellaneous	360	
		123,649
4. Burmese		2,723
5. Tibeto-Burman etc. dialects		860
6. Other oriental languages		1,538
Total		222,870

To these resources in manuscript and printed book must be added an extensive collection of photographs. These fall into two main groups, the first consisting of photographs of objects of archæological interest, supplied by the Department of the Archæological Survey of India, and representing a generous selection of all the photographs taken by order of that Department, while the second group is an accumulation, extremely miscellaneous in character, mainly derived from private benefaction, and including a large number of photographic relics of the Indian Mutiny. Both groups of photographs, and especially the former, are of the greatest interest and utility, and are in constant requisition.

It remains to be told, what use has been made of this great Library. We have seen that from its origin, the principle of free access for responsible and accredited members of the general public has been faithfully fol-

lowed; we have seen the rules for the use of the Library which were first compiled in 1817. In 1861 William Miller, in the course of a petition[1]—on that occasion unsuccessful—to be allowed the designation of Assistant Librarian, wrote, "After 23 years' experience as the working librarian, I feel the necessity for respectfully bringing under your consideration the importance of fixed laws to govern the future circulation of the Library, that should be imperative on all short of Departmental Secretaries, unless on their responsibility." He then made various suggestions for remedying existing abuses; but whether these recommendations were acted upon it is not now possible to trace. When the Museum was dispersed in 1874, the apartment allotted to the Museum and Library was reconstructed, and the present Reading Room was laid out: the practice of admitting the public daily, which had obtained when the Museum was still in being, was continued, but admission was restricted to ticket-holders.[2]

The earliest printed set of *Rules for the use of the Library* is apparently that issued in 1887.[3] These rules have been subsequently modified from time to time, with a view to rendering the contents of the Library at once more open to the public, and more secure for future generations of users. A copy of the rules as at present in force is forwarded to every applicant for a ticket of admission entitling him to use the Reading Room, and to borrow books.[4]

Statistics of the number of readers using the Library, the numbers of manuscripts and books lent, and the general business transacted, are only available from the year 1917, in which year the *Annual Report* of the

[1] *Financial Papers*, 1861, No. 484.

[2] See *The Times*, January 14, 1874. The number of visitors to the Museum during 1873 totalled 43,476: see *The Times*, 7 January 1874, p. 11[c].

[3] R. & L. 75/1887, approved Council 25 January 1887.

[4] L. 247/38, approved Council 14 June 1938.

Library was first issued.[1] Over so comparatively short a period, the growth in the Library's activities is quite remarkable, as the following table shews.

	1916-17.	1920-21.	1928-29.	1936-37.
Readers	1,851	3,001	4,756	3,436
Books lent	2,098	1,888	2,445	4,097
Letters despatched ...	1,679	1,847	1,812	3,445
Parcels despatched ...	487	553	466	551
MSS & Xylographs lent	—*	67	86	89

* No figures available.

Rost in 1877 wrote, in the memorandum which has already been mentioned,[2]

I am happy to be able to state that the liberality with which the treasures of our manuscript collections have been, and continue to be, made accessible to oriental scholars of all countries, has in no single instance been abused. On the contrary, there has, in most cases, been a fair return for it in the shape of valuable publications on the literature and archæology of India, many of which would not have seen the light but for the aid derived from our manuscripts.

Remarkable tribute to this liberal policy of loans is paid by the renowned Persian scholar, the late E. G. Browne, who writes in the preface to the *Catalogue of Two Collections of Persian & Arabic Manuscripts preserved in the India Office Library* (London, 1902):[3]

[1] The *Report of the Library Committee* of 1877 had suggested such an Annual Report, but no action was then taken. The Report was discontinued on grounds of economy during 1930-35.

[2] *Report of the Library Committee*, p. 10.

[3] Pp. v-vi. Particularly unfortunate is the absolute restriction imposed by the rules governing the management of the British Museum, in virtue of which no manuscript may be lent even to another public institution.

In undertaking to complete his (E. D. Ross's) work, I was actuated by two strong motives, friendship for one of the most gifted and amiable of my fellow-workers, and gratitude to the most liberal and enlightened of English Libraries. In nearly all civilised countries except England, manuscripts are freely lent (subject to reasonable precautions) by public Libraries to native and foreign scholars, whereby research is not merely aided but rendered possible. The general practice of English Libraries in refusing to lend their manuscripts not only impedes study and fetters innumerable useful enterprises, but would, but for the generosity and liberality of a few, at the head of which stands the India Office Library, inevitably result in the complete exclusion of British Orientalists from the privileges shared by their Continental colleagues. For this reason no Orientalist who has any adequate conception of his obligations and responsibilities would hesitate for a moment in rendering any service within his power to an institution to which he is so deeply indebted.

As to the general resources, printed books and manuscripts alike, of the Library as a whole, it is hardly too much to say, that no serious documented work has appeared during the past century, dealing with any aspect of the history, peoples, cultures, religions, and modern intellectual and political life of India, which has not laid this collection under contribution. Several well-known novelists and playwrights, moreover, have found useful material for their productions in the resources of the Library. Less spectacular, but no less valuable, has been its official utility, as a source of reference for the various departments of the Secretary of State for India and Burma, and for other government offices. Very many manuscripts in the collection have been utilized by scholars of all nations in their work of preparing critical editions of oriental texts; the European manuscripts have been no less successfully exploited in the fields of travel and all the branches of modern Indian history. In this connection it is necessary to refer to the invaluable assistance afforded by the collections of public

records which are preserved in the Records Department of the India Office, and which the Superintendent of that department renders available, subject to certain safeguards, to students in the Reading Room of the Library.

To this Reading Room resort scholars and students of all countries. There can hardly be a single savant living today, learned in one or other branch of oriental culture, who has not at some time sat in this room on the third floor of the India Office, using this collection which public policy and private munificence have jointly contributed to create. There can hardly be any Indian student, repairing to Europe for the purpose of completing his studies, who has not shared in these privileges, which are freely accorded to all who may care to profit by them. It has always been the avowed policy of the Librarian and his staff, to make students of all nationalities feel at home in this Library; and the touch of intimacy, the personal note has, it is believed, been felt and appreciated by very many who have worked there.

At the time when these pages are being written, a scheme is in progress for recataloguing the whole of the collection of European books. The bulk of this collection was catalogued many years ago, before librarianship had become the highly specialized science which it now is: modern requirements made it imperative once more to examine these books, and to classify them in great detail according to subject-matter. It is hoped that within seven years, a new complete catalogue of this side of the Library will have been published: there will then be available to the general public a bibliography of India more detailed and more complete than anything which has hitherto been attempted.

Plans for cataloguing the still uncatalogued manuscripts and oriental books are also in active progress, and it is probable that the coming decade will complete an output of work as remarkable and as creditable as that achieved during any period of the Library's history.

When the cost of compiling catalogues is considered, in terms of labour and money, it must always be remembered that a catalogue is a key to a treasury, without which access can never be won to the treasures it contains; and the efficiency and conscientiousness with which a library is administered may best be judged by the catalogues which it has published. Judged by this criterion, it may be conceded that the Library of the India Office is a public trust which has never wanted for faithful trustees.

When the Court of Directors of the East India Company, one hundred and forty years ago, first resolved to create a Repository for Oriental Writings, a revolutionary movement was sweeping through the western world, brushing away the privileges and preconceptions of centuries. The orientalist movement, which had its origins in that troubled time, aimed and still aims at bridging the differences of language and culture which sunder East and West. The intervening years have brought in their train other problems, which a century ago could never have been dreamed of; and not the least of those problems is the almost fantastic rapidity with which means of intercommunication have been increased and accelerated. All the nations of the world are now near neighbours: but good neighbourliness depends upon mutual understanding and respect. The orientalist seeks, honestly and sincerely, to interpret the eastern mind and spirit to the West: can it be denied that, in his own modest way, he is making an important contribution to the peace of the world? To the studies of the orientalist —and every person genuinely interested in eastern affairs is a true orientalist—this great library, the repository of eastern treasures situated in the capital of the West, freely offers all its rich resources. Upon this will to service, the title of its being rests secure.

APPENDIX

THE following catalogues have been compiled, and others are in course of preparation:

1. ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS AND XYLOGRAPHS.

(a) *In Print.*

Sanskrit.—Vol. I. J. Eggeling. London 1888-1904.
Vol. II. A. B. Keith and F. W. Thomas. Oxford, 1934.
Royal Society Collection. C. H. Tawney and F. W. Thomas. London, 1903.
Aufrecht Collection (MSS., Indices, Pratīka-lists, &c.). F. W. Thomas. *J.R.A.S.*, London, 1908, pp. 1029-63.

Arabic.—Vol. I. O. Loth. London, 1877.
Vol. II. Pt. 1 (Qur'ānic Literature). C. A. Storey. London, 1930. Pt. 2 (Ṣūfism and Ethics). A. J. Arberry. London, 1936. Pt. 3 (Fiqh). R. Levy. London, 1937. (Other parts in progress.)

Persian.—Vol. I. H. Ethé. Oxford, 1903.
Vol. II. H. Ethé and E. Edwards. Oxford, 1936.
Vol. III. C. A. Storey, R. Levy and A. J. Arberry. (In progress.)

Arabic & Persian.—Royal Society Collection. E. D. Ross and E. G. Browne. London, 1902.

Bengali & Assamese.—J. F. Blumhardt. Oxford, 1924.

Chinese.—Rev. J. Summers. London, 1872.
(Tripitaka). S. Beal. London, 1876.
„ Bunyiu Nanjio. Oxford, 1883.

Hindustani.—J. F. Blumhardt. Oxford, 1926.

Marathi.—J. F. Blumhardt and S. G. Kanhere (in the press).

Javanese.—S. Keyser (*Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Neêrlandsch Indië*, The Hague, 1854, Pt. II, pp. 339-42).

Malay.—H. van der Tuuk (*Tijdschr. voor Nederlandsch Indië*, 1849 (1), pp. 385-400).

Oriya.—J. F. Blumhardt. Oxford, 1924.

Pali.—H. Oldenburg (*Journal of the Pali Text Society*, London, 1882, pp. 59-128).
(Mandalay). V. Fausböll (*Journal of the Pali Text Society*, London, 1897, pp. 1-52).

Zend and Pahlavi.—M. N. Dhalla (*J.R.A.S.*, London, 1912, pp. 387-98).

(b) *In Manuscript.*

Ethiopic & Syriac.—W. Wright.

Chinese.—S. Beal.
(Royal Society Collection). H. A. Giles.

Burmese.—E. Chevillion.
(Mandalay) Taw Sein Ko (Notes).

Siamese.—H. Alabaster.

Batta.—H. van der Tuuk.

Tibetan.—L. de la Vallée Poussin.

2. European Manuscripts.

Vol. I. The Mackenzie Collections. Pt. 1: The 1822 Collection and the Private Collection. C. O. Blagden. London, 1916. Pt. 2: The General Collection. J. Charpentier and E. H. Johnston (in the press).

Vol. II. Pt. 1: The Orme Collection. S. C. Hill. London, 1916. Pt. 2: Minor Collections and Miscellaneous MSS. Section i (Nos. 1-538). G. R. Kaye. London, 1936. Section ii (Nos. 539-842). E. H. Johnston (in the press).

3. Printed Books and Lithographs.

E.I. Co's. Library Catalogue, London, 1845. Supplement, London, 1851. (Superseded.)

Vol. I and Index. London, 1888.

Vol. I (Supplement 1). London, 1895.

Vol. I (Supplement 2). London, 1909.

Vol. I (Accessions): 1, 1911; 2, 1911; 3, 1912; 4, 1912; 5, 1913; 6, 1913; 7, 1918; 8, 1919; 9, 1920; 10, 1921; 11, 1923; 12, 1924; 13, 1926; 14, 1928; 15, 1931; 16, 1934; 17, 1936; 18, 1936. (Further accessions on cards.)

Vol. II. Pt. 1: Sanskrit Books, R. Rost. London, 1897. Revised edition to 1932. Pran Nath and J. B. Chaudhuri. (In the press.)

Vol. II. Pt. 2: Hindustani Books. J. F. Blumhardt. London, 1900.

Vol. II. Pt. 3: Hindi, Panjabi, Pushtu and Sindhi Books. J. F. Blumhardt. London, 1902.

Vol. II. Pt. 4: Bengali, Oriya and Assamese Books. J. F. Blumhardt. London, 1905. Supplement, 1906-20, Bengali Books. J. F. Blumhardt. London, 1923.

Vol. II. Pt. 5: Marathi and Gujerati Books. J. F. Blumhardt. London, 1907.

Vol. II. Pt. 6: Persian Books. A. J. Arberry. London, 1937.

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